



Microsoft Windows Server System

Case study

“We have worked with Mo and General Informatics for almost 10 years now. Our servers and network have practically never been down. The one time our server totally failed, our employees were back working within the hour.”

Chris Pellegrin
Chief Operating Officer,
CSRS



Innovative planning and design solutions firm deploys services and software from General Informatics to streamline practice.

As corporations grow in size, so do their needs for technology advancement. CSRS, a Baton Rouge design services firm, had a problem on their hands as information within their business grew exponentially with the rapid expansion of the company. Project figures were accumulating rapidly, remote offices were being created, and operational tasks were increasing -- they needed storage, organization, and accessibility fast! Now, with Microsoft Windows Server System and specially designed project management software from General Informatics, information can be quickly retrieved and shared, capacity of workers has increased, and business practices have been streamlined. CSRS can rest easy, now that data is stable and secure and project workflow is more efficient.

CUSTOMER PROFILE	BUSINESS SITUATION	SOLUTION	BENEFITS
<p>Since 1978, CSRS, Inc. has focused on providing premier professional design services to a local, regional, and national level. Though currently specializing in programming and planning, the firm also employs their services in areas such as architecture, civil engineering, site development, and land surveying. CSRS strives to manage projects in an efficient and effective way while meeting the demand for technology infrastructure through their designs.</p>	<p>CSRS was in the midst of a rapid expansion as it began to shift its focus to project planning and management. Their current technology consisted of slow and unreliable internet connections and file storage and disparate systems that inhibited smooth operations. The sudden increase and overflow of information from thousands of projects dictated the need for technology integration and specialized software to streamline business practices.</p>	<p>CSRS deployed a General Informatics business solution based on Microsoft Windows System Server and specialized software that provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to manage and track hundreds of projects simultaneously ▪ Specialized exchange and web servers ▪ Company-wide e-mail and shared fax services ▪ Remote access for out-of-office needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased value of the organization through better ability to satisfy the client ▪ Substantial growth of profit margins and productivity ▪ Improved operational efficiency and smooth project flow through reliable technology systems ▪ Aligned IT and business objectives ▪ Increased reliability and security of IT infrastructure ▪ Freedom from the office via wireless mobile devices

Situation

In 1997, CSRS was growing at an incredible rate through their expertise and innovation in areas of Architecture, Civil Engineering, Planning and Development, and Land Surveying. The company was moving into their new award-winning facility as they expanded the reach of their business.

During this time, the East Baton Rouge Parish School system selected CSRS to handle a 200 million dollar renovation to various schools in the parish. The number of simultaneous projects substantially increased with the number of individual improvement projects per school, skyrocketing the total projects being handled at any one time into the thousands. The company was faced with a sudden surplus of information and the need for it to be accessible and organized.

Unfortunately, the technology currently in place was neither effective nor efficient at streamlining business practices. Internet connections were slow, networks were not reliable, storage was inadequate and undependable, and disparate systems prevented uniformity in the organization. In addition, as the company expanded to include remote locations, connecting and sharing information with these offices became an obstacle and began to inhibit the effectiveness of the organization. CSRS required a technology upgrade and expansion to match and ease the task of achieving their business objectives.

Solution

Until recently, CSRS relied on a Novell platform for their limited source of file printing and storage. Integrating a solution from General Informatics based on Windows System Server, a specialized exchange and web server, and specially designed software, provided them with better flow and storage of information.

By improving the speed and security of their network and installing a remote access and fax server, it's never been easier or faster for employees to submit and retrieve information when they need it. Managers and workers out in the field can now quickly access secure information, and concerns and questions are able to be answered in a timelier fashion. In addition, the task of coordinating and overseeing multiple projects has been simplified through the task management software.

Another key to the success of CSRS's technology integration was the upgrade of their storage by 2000 percent by General Informatics. Through the use of an SQL server, databases were enhanced to allow thousands of data and documents to be stored on one secure network. Processes that once took hours can now be completed within minutes.

Did they consider any other options? What made them choose General Informatics?

Secure Company-wide e-mail and information system. Windows Server System provides CSRS with critical e-mail capabilities for all PCs throughout the company. The built-in exchange server enhances collaboration services with security, reliability, and ease of access, giving information workers better control of their business communications.

Specialized project management software. Rather than relying on outdated methods for project management, the company now uses specially designed software from General Informatics to streamline project management tasks and decisions.

This approach enables each worker to submit and retrieve protected information from a reliable infrastructure in order to manipulate that data for the specified project.



Remote IT access. Workers in remote offices and out in the field now have easy access to company information whenever they need it. Wireless software devices enable workers quick and easy access, thereby reducing wasted time and increasing efficiency.

Benefits

CSRS now has the capacity and security to handle operational tasks, the ability to better coordinate workflow, and access to accurate, real-time information, both in the office and the field. As a result, the company is making gains in efficiency, control, and management, all with a positive effect on both its profits, client relationships, and the organization as a whole.

Improved project coordination. CSRS was chosen to handle the repair of East Baton Rouge schools, an undertaking with a budget of 200 million dollars and roughly 90 schools.

For this project, each individual school was assessed for repairs, detailed information had to be submitted, costs were allocated, and then the task of coordinating the hundreds of projects began. Before the IT integration from General Informatics, sharing data and coordinating project flow through the old systems was inefficient and slow. Keying and retrieving data was a daunting task, and projects suffered as a result.

Heightened productivity. With its new environment and applications in place,

General Informatics is a systems integrator who combines various IT components and business solutions into a functioning system, customized for the customer's needs.

For more information about General Informatics:

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CSRS has cut down the cycle time of every one of its processes. The capabilities of their remote access server have helped eliminate the need for employees to travel to the office for needed information, resulting in considerable time savings.

Windows System Server also contributes to office employee productivity: all employees can find the information they need when they need it – office users are no longer constantly interrupted by remote workers asking them to track down files. Also, before, the budgeting process was complicated and time consuming and added unnecessary time to each project cycle time. Now, the company uses specialized software to share files from its server and makes necessary changes to the information right then and there.

Because of the ease of information flow, workers have become more knowledge-based, increasing their capacity to new heights.

Increased value of organization.

Through better workflow coordination and ease of information access, projects are more increasingly done on time and on budget. The upgrade from General Informatics has aided CSRS in improving operational efficiency and personal productivity, thereby reducing operating expenses and improving profit margins. Clients are more satisfied as a result, enhancing the value of the company.

Software and Services

Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional

Microsoft Office 2003 Professional Edition

Microsoft Windows Server 2003

Microsoft Exchange Server 2003

Internet Information Services 6.0

Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2000

Windows SharePoint™ Services

GFI Shared Fax Service

Hardware

- Dell PowerEdge 2800 server with a Xeon 2.4 gigahertz (GHz) processor, 1 gigabyte (GB) RAM, and a redundant power supply
- RAID 5 Perc 4 processor with two 73-GB, 10,000 RPM SCSI hard drives
- 4 Dell Precision 450 desktop PCs with 2.4-GHz Pentium 4 processors and 512 megabytes (MB) RAM, a 40-GB hard drive, running Windows XP Professional and wireless cards, and 15-inch flat screen monitors
- 2 HP LaserJet 8100 printers
- 1 Epson LQ570 printer
- Pocket PCs with Telephony
- Dell TrueMobile 2300 Wireless 802.11b/g Broadband Router

