



Cognos Axiant 4GL Earning Top Marks at the University of Glamorgan

The University of Glamorgan has taken an important step forward in its efforts to upgrade to client-server systems and is running its admissions operations more effectively, thanks to Axiant 4GL 2.0 and specialized consulting services from Cognos.



The university has completed a project to migrate its PowerHouse-based admissions system from a VAX machine to an Axiant client-server environment, and the move is paying off in the form of better system performance, functionality and ease of use.

“The big gain for us is speed. It’s running much faster than when it was running on the old VAX,” says Sarah Rees, Team Leader, Corporate Systems. “The speed and the Windows-like screens makes it easier to use, and that helps to make everyone more productive.”

The university, located near Cardiff in Wales, began the migration project early last year as part of its Information Systems Strategy. “Wherever possible, the strategy calls for us to acquire client-server systems and run them on a Windows NT environment,” Rees says. “Axiant allows us to fulfil that requirement.”

The project came with its share of challenges, including converting flat files, written in PowerHouse 6.10.E for a VAX 6410, to a Microsoft SQL Server relational database. In addition, the migrated application, known as ADMIT, had to be able to interface with the university’s other corporate systems and with the systems operated by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), the central clearing organization for post-secondary student admission applications in the United Kingdom.

To ensure the migration went as smoothly as possible, Rees called on Cognos’ Axiant fast-track deployment team for assistance and got exactly what she was looking for – skilled consultants who could put the project in motion and get much of the nitty-gritty work done in less than a week. “We signed up for the fast-track service offered by Cognos, and at the end of our few days (with the team) we had the majority of our relational database in place and a good introduction to the Axiant product,” Rees says.

The project was completed in six months and the university went live with the application in November. Today ADMIT provides campus-wide access to student admissions data stored in the Microsoft SQL Server 6.5 database. All batch processing is carried out via SQL scripts. There are about 130 screens and 40 users running fat clients. The university handles up to 10,000 application choices at any one time.

While the system’s speed is impressive, Rees says it’s not the only performance gain. Gone are the days of back-end crashes. In addition, the client-server environment allows for more flexible reporting, which is being done using Impromptu and



PowerPlay. “The ability to use the Axiant application, integrated with Impromptu and PowerPlay, is a big advantage for us,” Rees says. “It’s making us more efficient because the information our employees need is more readily available.”

And the users like the look, feel, and speed of the system. “The feedback we’re getting from users is very favorable, especially in terms of what they are able to do with reporting and the overall speed.”

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