



A SIMPLE AND SEAMLESS TRANSITION FROM LEGACY SOFTWARE TO THE ENTERPRISE CLOUD

Andrew Pfeiffer, manager of the BPM Center of Excellence at Cox Communication, reflects on the migration process to the iGrafx Enterprise Cloud

Introduction

Mr. Andrew Pfeiffer is the manager of the BPM Center of Excellence at Cox. He is an ASQ Certified Six Sigma Blackbelt, an ABPMP Certified Business Process Professional and a PMI Project Management Professional with more than 20 years of BPM experience. Andrew planned and executed Cox Communications' move to the iGrafx Enterprise Cloud over the course of about 3 months in the spring of 2020.

Why did you want to migrate? What were the issues, challenges, and drivers of migration?

We want to receive iGrafx platform feature updates more frequently. The desktop software is updated much less frequently than the platform – especially compared to the Cloud version of the platform. A seamless push of new features to Cox Communications is ideal. We wanted the iGrafx diagramming and modeling capabilities in the cloud-based platform to catch up to the capabilities in the legacy desktop software. Version 17.7 meets our minimum requirements at Cox for migration.

The modern, web-based interface is easier to use overall. We want a more user-friendly experience for iGrafx users at Cox Communications. It also makes governance and management of the iGrafx instance easier. The Enterprise Cloud eliminates IT dependencies, especially with the retirement of the desktop software. Also, the web platform Viewer, Collaborator, Designer and Architect licenses make management of users and their capabilities/permissions much more streamlined.

What iGrafx solution did Cox Communications implement?

iGrafx Enterprise Cloud version 17.7.0 on April 16, 2020.

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What was your experience as the leader of the migration at Cox Communications?

The technical aspects of the migration were very straightforward – simply a “lift and shift” that took place over a single weekend. We provided iGrafx a copy of our database as well as our user authentication schema, which was deployed into the Cloud environment within 24 hours. When users arrived back at Cox Communications on Monday, the only difference they noticed was a change to the URL they used.

We did perform a ‘test’ migration of the databases several weeks before the true production migration. This test was to ensure that everyone knew what to expect and what was needed, as well as provide insight into timing. We went into the production move very confident of what to expect and experienced no issues.

The more complex elements were all in the planning, foresight and change management. As likely will not be a surprise to anyone who works in a large enterprise, much came down to typical cat-herding, since every department inevitably has differing priorities. The process designer community, while relatively straightforward, still required training on what was going to change, why the change was taking place, the benefits they would realize and the simple logistics of a new iGrafx login URL. To assist, we created “how to” and other basic user documentation.

The engagement of IT to support the migration required more work. Securing funding for making the change (to decommission the legacy self-hosted platform and to set up monitoring for the new cloud-based instance) was the most contentious issue, as the initial quote from IT seemed high and required capital expensing...the type of funds that weren't available.

Fortunately, after liaising between IT and Finance, we were able to clarify what costs would need to be capitalized vs. operationally expensed. We learned that such cloud migrations would not be capitalized, clearing the way to migrate.

Finally, several discussions were necessary between Cox IT's Security team and the iGrafx team to satisfy the Cox IT security team's requirements for Active Directory (User Management) integration for Cloud/SaaS providers

Any unexpected challenges with the migration?

It is important to consider your user management strategy and work with your IT department to understand their requirements. If requirements change, this can lead to complications and a lot of manual work later.

Migration of legacy 'iGrafx Desktop' files to the Web Diagramming format was not seamless, as a “brand new” file was created at time of conversion and history was not visible. It is understood that this is necessary to ensure audit traceability of older documentation, but it does require opening the old version of the file to see changes. The good news is, though, that the platform has a great ‘bulk conversion’ utility, which makes the conversion process very simple.

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Any unexpected benefits and/or other feedback that might help others making the migration?The Solution

In all, this was a relatively simple and seamless experience. Be prepared to sort through the business/finance/IT bureaucracy of your organization, but know that once those pieces are in place, the actual migration is straightforward. Communication is key. In advance of the change, I hosted four different 60-minute webinars for two different audiences in the user community, covering multiple time zones on different days. One topic was a general overview of the platform's capabilities for both Designers and Collaborators. The other topic was specific to Designers and Web Diagramming.

We sent out numerous announcements to the entire community. 1 month out, 2 weeks out, 1 week out, 3 days out, etc. But even with all the pre-emptive notification, about 10% of my user community was unaware that the change to the cloud was taking place until after the change had happened. They were easily brought on board, but the point is, some people will need more handholding.

Now that we are 3 months on the iGrafx Enterprise Cloud, I have already had the opportunity to roll out many new features to my user community and am looking forward to more this quarter. The team is extremely enthusiastic about regular new upgrades.

I was concerned about the perception and adoption of the new Web Diagramming capabilities, especially for long time desktop users, but the response and feedback has been more positive than I could have hoped for, which has accelerated our plans for retiring the desktop.

For More Information

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