GIE INSURANCE GROUP USES ARCAD TOOLS DIRECTLY FROM ECLIPSE

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GIE Insurance Group uses ARCAD tools from their workstations with the help of ARCAD's Eclipse Plug-in.

GIE Insurance Group

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

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>
> *Director of R&D at GIE*

GIE Insurance handles the maintenance and application operations for the DOM/TOM: Indian, Pacific, and Caribbean Oceans. Until now, version management and deployment to production for RPG applications on the IBM i were handled by programs created in-house. But the programming wasn't kept up to date, and the tools had become obsolete. The homegrown solution didn't take into account the most recent features of the platform: DB2, SQL, ILE, N tiers components. It also failed to meet GIE's growing needs for configuration management for testing sites as well as production.

GIE had already implemented pieces of ARCAD Software:
- *ARCAD–Open Repository for the components repository*
- *ARCAD-Observer for access to the repository, documentation, and retro-documentation*
- *ARCAD-Skipper for versioning and configuration management*
- *ARCAD plug-in for Changer and ARCAD plug-in for Changer Client, plug-ins that allowed users to access ARCAD tools from their workstations in Eclipse.*

■ The Advantages

The ARCAD package replaced the in-house solution for version management giving GIE enhanced functionality over the process. *"Today, the delivery process is completely reliable and GIE has the ability to produce real documentation of its applications and can now complete a full analysis of objects and their cross-reference"*, explains the Director of R&D. The ease of use gained the appreciation of the Project Manager.

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Today the ARCAD tools are accessible graphically via the workstation or integrated via Eclipse.

■ New GUI interface thanks to ARCAD plug-ins

GIE developers, analysts, project managers, and production directors were working solely on the green screen but looking to move away from it to a graphical user interface. The change was met with some hesitation by team members, but they quickly adapted to the new interface, and were happy with the ease of use and the powerful of the tools that were included.

The change to a GUI was put in place with the help of ARCAD plug-ins. It allowed them to integrate tools from various environments: Eclipse, WDSc, etc. ARCAD's multi-platform solution manages IBM i components alongside J2EE Java components. In particular, ARCAD plug-in for Changer allows GIE to manage IBM i applications directly from the workstation, and the ARCAD plug-in for Changer Client allows GIE to manage their Java/Web applications.

■ ARCAD Solutions help with restructuring

GIE's IT Director was looking for better way to track users' daily progress on projects. Along with ARCAD's operational functionality, the solution also responded to this need and helped to contribute a structured approach to application management. ARCAD solutions put the measures in place to structure the process and in doing so, make users' work more relevant and more efficient.

At GIE, the team wanted a solution with greater functionality and better security. But first and foremost, their concern was the necessity of modifying their work methods. They needed to be convinced, according to the Director of R&D, *“In the beginning of the project, we tended to underestimate the need to convince users of the changes and the benefits they would gain, but we modified the implementation process to include it.”*

■ The project implementation

The project took 7 months and was put in place in 3 steps:

- Migration of the old tools to ARCAD
- Installation of ARCAD in the GIE environment
- Solution training and help with integration

The deployment of the solution was done with one main switchover, a "big-bang" of sorts for the 35 users. The implementation went smoothly and needed only a few, small adjustments once in place. ■

The Complete Solution

GIE regularly installs the newest versions of ARCAD Software, equating to a new version approximately once a year. The upgrade is now a manageable amount of work. Solution administrators designate two users to set up and support the upgrade, spending half a day to get up to speed, including the training time to obtain the competence to perform their work effectively. It is a considerable investment for a small structure of 35 people. Following the ARCAD outsource this function and give it to ARCAD, who will set up a hot line and take charge of both the support and the development of new tools.