

Redwood Business Solutions

Making web-based report distribution a reality.

At A Glance

Industry

- Retail

Environment

- AS/400, UNIX, VMS
- Oracle Financials, PeopleSoft and other applications
- Microsoft Office reports
- 2000 end-users in over 25 departments

Key Challenges

- High costs of printing and delivery of reports
- Delay in getting daily sales information to stores
- No guarantee that information was being received or looked at

The Solution

- Report2Web repository for documents from all applications
- Quick and easy Web access by all business users
- Email alerts sent to users when reports are available

Key Benefits

- More timely delivery of information
- Savings of thousands of dollars in printing costs
- Increased productivity and significant time savings
- Elimination of end-user training
- More than over one week saved in processing the monthly payroll



Up-to-date information for all at Staples with Report2Web

When Staples' IT strategy called for the deployment of enterprise systems, which required minimal end-user training and a net reduction in operational costs, it realized that Report2Web would help make this goal a reality, in addition to getting information delivered throughout the organization in a timely manner.



Staples, Inc. is an \$11 billion retailer of office supplies, business services, furniture and technology to consumers and businesses, from home-based businesses to Fortune 500 companies in the United States, Canada and Europe. Headquartered outside Boston, Staples invented the office superstore concept and today is the largest operator of office superstores in the world. The company has approximately 53,000 associates serving customers through more than 1,400 office superstores, mail order catalogs, e-commerce and a contract business.

With a corporate mission statement of "Slashing the cost and hassle of running your business!", Staples realizes the business value that IT can play in giving the company its competitive advantage. Timely receipt of information was one crucial area which Staples was looking to improve in its strive for retail success. Its mission statement, together with its business values, led Staples to improve the delivery of information to stores, safe in the knowledge that it would ultimately lead to lower prices and better customer service.

A Costly and Labor-intensive Process

Staples runs a variety of business applications including Oracle Financials, PeopleSoft and other applications across a mixture of platforms including UNIX, AS/400 and VMS. Reports generated from these systems, together with a large number of Word and Excel documents, results in over 720 distinct published reports, each with a varying number of versions, plus about 75 documents that are in a non-report format, such as minutes from meetings or FAQs.

Staples was aware that its overhead in distributing reports was costly. Christine Harrington, IS Manager at Staples, takes up the story: "We knew that we could do things more efficiently. For a system-generated report, we used to

"... we're confident that Report2Web was one of the greatest investments we ever made."

**Christine Harrington, IS Manager,
Staples**



Redwood Business Solutions

Making web-based report distribution a reality.

automatically print thousands of pages, separate the relevant pages for each store manually and then distribute them to each and every store by truck or mail. In most cases, the store managers would only require one page of this information, so stores were being inundated with tons of paper that weren't necessarily being looked at. We knew that there had to be a better way of disseminating only the most relevant pieces of information to stores and to the business functions at corporate headquarters."

Some reports were also extracted from source systems, manually manipulated to pull out the individual store reports, and then distributed to stores via email. Ms. Harrington explains: "By manually manipulating the reports, we were losing valuable time and causing a delay in getting the information out to the business users. Daily sales report distribution was virtually impossible."

An Ideal Solution in Report2Web

When looking for a solution, Staples had a very comprehensive list of requirements that had to be met. Ms. Harrington explains: "We evaluated five products in total with three of them making it to the shortlist. The requirements ranged from the ability to combine multiple report sources into one report to the ability to search and find the reports you were looking for. Report2Web scored consistently higher



than the other solutions we were looking at, especially in the areas of security and report distribution."

Today, Report2Web is being used as a central repository for all the disparate sources of information. Users are able to view their information via a Web browser. Most of the reports are automatically distributed to the end-user via Report2Web's subscription feature, where users subscribe to be notified when their documents are ready for viewing.

Ms. Harrington continues: "We have approximately 2,000 end-users accessing the information that they are authorized to see. The stores access their reports, while HQ, has access to their corporate-related reports. The content of reports distributed ranges from financial information to operational and HR reports. Report generation can be hourly, daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly and Report2Web helps us control all versions of the reports."

Staples is making great use of the Report2Web Burster, which is able to split out the one large store-related P&L document into individual store views of the information. Ms. Harrington continues: "We find the Burster feature invaluable when distributing information to our stores. The P&L report is a 7,000-page document that is split into individual 3-4 page views for each store. This saves us valuable time in not only having to manually separate the 7,000 pages but also in being able to get the information to the stores in a timely manner."

One of the business users at Staples, David Smiley, Manager of G/L Systems adds: "Previously, report distribution was tedious and cumbersome. With Report2Web, we are able to save time using the bursting feature, where we now only run one report for all locations. Being able to use the filter function also adds great value, as we can now jump to the sections of the report that we want to see

without having to scroll through the entire document."

At a corporate level, the HR department has seen significant benefits as a result of using Report2Web, especially when running the payroll. Ms. Harrington explains: "With Report2Web in place, we have saved one week in processing time and making amendments is now a simple task that can be done within the payroll schedule. Before, amendments had to be made in the following month, and at the end of the day, accurate pay slips lead to a happier workforce!"

The Bottom Line

Report2Web has given store managers one-stop access for all their reporting needs, creating huge time savings.

Prior to implementing Report2Web, Staples was printing in excess of 200,000 pages per month. With Report2Web in place, the corporate data center is now only printing about 6,000 pages. The number of jobs having to be run in order to print the necessary reports has been reduced from 130 to 7 because of Report2Web's ability to combine multiple sources into one report.

Ms. Harrington continues: "As a result of Report2Web, we have managed to free up a large amount of real estate in the original data center because the printing has been decentralized to the stores. We are saving thousands of dollars per year in paper alone. We're confident that Report2Web was one of the greatest investments we ever made."

Britt Hed, IS Director, at Staples concludes: "Report2Web has provided Staples with a very cost-effective way to electronically distribute operational and management reports to our retail stores, as well as corporate headquarters. We are highly satisfied with Report2Web and our enhanced ability to deliver information quickly and securely to a wide audience."