



Telecommunications IT Team Reduces Search Time by 50 Per Cent with Enterprise Portal

Overview

Country or Region: Bahrain
Industry: Telecommunications

Customer Profile

Batelco is a leading telecommunications provider in Bahrain. The company employs 1,500 people and delivers mobile, broadband, fixed line and data services to more than 700,000 customers.

Business Situation

Batelco has invested in a number of line-of-business applications, including IBM FileNet IDM. It wanted to consolidate all its applications into one portal to reduce search time.

Solution

With help from Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Netways, Batelco upgraded its intranet to Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007, supported by AMD Opteron™ processors.

Benefits

- Documents located faster.
- Users supported simultaneously.
- Workflows created in two days.
- Information kept confidential.
- Existing investments optimised.

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Saleh Tarradah, Chief Information Officer, Batelco

Batelco is a telecommunications company based in Bahrain. Established in 1981, it has operations in Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. The company's customer data is held in disparate line-of-business applications, making it difficult for employees to find. In addition, it usually takes up to two weeks for the software development team to create workflows that support the development of new products and services. In October 2007, Batelco deployed a new intranet based on Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Server 2007 and AMD Opteron™ processors. The solution integrates the company's line-of-business applications, including IBM FileNet IDM. By using new features such as Enterprise Search in Office SharePoint Server 2007 and enhanced developer tools, employees can find the information they need up to 50 per cent faster, and the software development team can create a new workflows in just two days.



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Situation

Established in 1981, Batelco is Bahrain's largest telecommunications company, with operations in Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. The Middle East is one of the world's most competitive new telecommunications markets. To maintain its position as a market leader, the company focuses on delivering consistently innovative and price-competitive services to domestic, government, and corporate customers.

Batelco employs more than 1,500 people. For all employees, fast access to information held in the company's many business applications is critical. Customer-facing staff—such as account managers and call centre agents—need to quickly search a range of information to provide the best possible service.

Business development teams across sales, marketing, and product management, also need fast access to line-of-business data to develop new products and services. They have to follow specific workflows so that product requests are supported with accurate information and are signed off at each stage of the approval process.

With the company's business information held in a number of different applications, it was difficult for the software development team to support workflow requests for new products and services quickly. Saleh Tarradah, Chief Information Officer, Batelco, says: “The development team receives up to 30 new workflow requests each month, but it could take more than two weeks to complete each one. This made it slow to get new services to market.”

Until 2007, employees used the company's intranet—based on Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003—to find and store information. They also logged on to five different business applications, including IBM

FileNet IDM, Lotus Notes e-mail, a customer relationship management (CRM) application, and finance and billing systems. Tarradah says: “It took an employee several minutes just to verify information such as a customer's charges or connection details, or to deal with a request or complaint.”

Batelco wanted to make it faster and easier for employees to search for information across the company's existing systems. Batelco also wanted an environment that would help the development team to support business operations with fast creation of workflows. In 2007, Batelco began looking for a solution that could:

- Help employees search for documents faster and deliver accurate search results.
- Help the developer team to quickly respond to business requests for new workflows.

Solution

In May 2007, Batelco enlisted local Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Netways to plan a new intranet based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 and AMD hardware. The solution uses the enhanced integration features in Office SharePoint Server 2007 to extend the range of business applications, databases, and external content accessible through the company's intranet.

As part of the project, Batelco is taking advantage of the Enterprise Search feature in Office SharePoint Server 2007, supported by AMD Opteron™ processors. This provides employees with a fast, accurate search tool. New features in Office SharePoint Server 2007 also help the company's developer team create workflows more easily.

In June 2007, Netways connected IBM FileNet IDM and Lotus Notes e-mail to Office SharePoint Server 2007. Netways also used

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a customised migration tool—based on Microsoft .NET 2.0—to move the company’s shared drives to Office SharePoint Server 2007, along with existing Web Parts and the Active Directory® service.

Tools required to build workflow have also been fully integrated with Office SharePoint Server 2007. Tarradah says: “The migration was straightforward, and the company plans to integrate other workflows in the near future.”

With the new system, employees use a single logon to access their line-of-business applications and the company’s intranet. They can then use the Enterprise Search feature to find documents located in the company’s business systems—including IBM FileNet IDM and Lotus Notes e-mail.

Batelco servers are powered by AMD Opteron™ 32-bit processors. These use AMD Direct Connect Architecture to deliver scalable, high-speed search performance across all files and applications. The AMD Opteron™ processors were developed alongside Office SharePoint Server 2007 to support fast search with reduced power requirements.

New features in Office SharePoint Server 2007, such as Microsoft Office SharePoint Designer 2007 and Microsoft Visual Studio® 2005 development system, provide developers with the tools to create code-free workflows, which can be tested and deployed to relevant business teams rapidly.

Benefits

The IT team has halved the time it takes for employees to search for documents, while providing the software development team with the tools to easily create new workflows. Employees can deliver fast and accurate responses to customers, while the development team can support new business

initiatives quickly. Additional benefits include secure application access, which helps to ensure that only employees with the appropriate level of access view confidential customer data.

Employees Locate Documents 50 Per Cent Faster

Customer-facing employees—such as account managers and call centre agents—can now search for information quickly and easily, whereas before, employees used to take several minutes to locate each document or customer file.

“By using the Enterprise Search feature in Office SharePoint Server 2007, employees can locate the information they need in just few minutes,” Tarradah says.

Hardware Supports Hundreds of Users Simultaneously

With the potential for 1,500 employees to use the Enterprise Search feature at any one time, it’s important that the solution can support hundreds of users without compromising the speed or accuracy of search results. Dr. Ulrich Knechtel, Strategic Alliances Manager, AMD, says: “AMD Opteron processors are designed to complement the requirements of Enterprise Search in Office SharePoint Server 2007, and results are returned quickly, regardless of the number of users or the location of the data.”

Development Team Easily Supports New Business Initiatives

It now takes as little as two days for the software development team to create a new workflow, so they can support a greater number of new business initiatives. Teams can use a specially created workflow to obtain the correct data for new product proposals and ensure they have sign-off from relevant managers and business units. This helps them to quickly get new products to market.

For More Information

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For more information about Netways products and services, visit the Web site at: www.netways.com

For more information about Batelco products and services, call + 973 17 88 18 81 or visit the Web site at: www.batelco.com

Customer Information Remains Confidential

With the new solution, it is easy for the IT team to ensure Batelco complies with regulations governing the security of customer data. When an employee uses Enterprise Search, they only receive the results related to the level of access they have been granted. For example, a call centre agent may look up a customer name to check a correct address. However, a manager can search for the same name and view more comprehensive data, such as a customer's payment history.

Existing Application Investments Are Optimised

Most of the company's disparate business systems are now integrated and accessible through Office SharePoint Server 2007. All employees—from call centre agents to software developers—can make better use of the data held in the company's business systems.

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to: www.microsoft.com/servers/default.aspx

Software and Services

- Microsoft Visual Studio
 - Microsoft Visual Studio 2005
- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007
 - Microsoft Office SharePoint Designer 2007
- Technologies
 - Active Directory