

MARACIS PERSPECTIVE

MARACIS SOLUTIONS LTD
the cutting edge of PowerBuilder development

SPRING 2007

Maracis pushes the boundaries of PowerBuilder®

The launch of PowerBuilder 11 has vindicated the strategic decision made by Maracis Solutions Ltd in 1998 not to jump on the web/Java bandwagon but to specialise in PowerBuilder. Over the years, each new release of PowerBuilder has enabled Maracis to extend and enhance applications developed for the NHS, as well as developing new solutions in line with increasing demand for improved performance and integrated access to core patient information.

“Maracis was formed by a group of people who had worked within the NHS,” explained Martin Braithwaite, Managing Director. “It was obvious to us that information management was key to the NHS and our philosophy has always been to develop solutions for the NHS that focus on the running of a health business and not on the mere collection of data.”

The decision to standardise exclusively on PowerBuilder has brought numerous benefits to Maracis’ user-base. NHS Trusts gain functionality and enhanced business capabilities and do not have to rework established business processes because of limitations in technology. The availability of PowerBuilder 11 allows Maracis to deliver even more flexibility and functionality, including the ability to select the deployment method for applications.

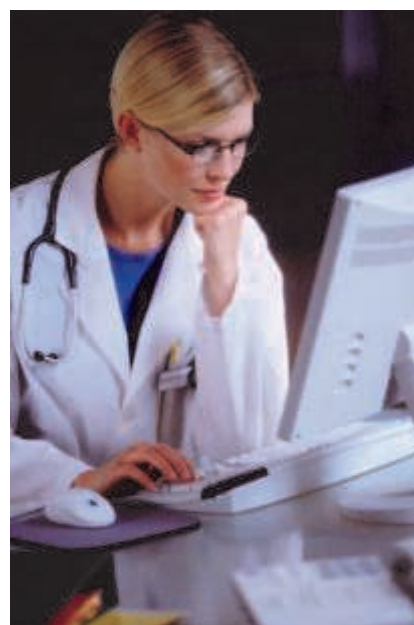
“With PowerBuilder 11 we can take the same application and give clients the option of deployment via thin client, as traditional client/server win32.exe or WinForm, or

as a web-based solution,” continued Martin. “This allows Trusts to make our applications available as a web service without any of the costs in development, implementation, training and roll-out normally associated with such strategic changes.”

£1 billion of business

The NHS has been quick to recognise the benefits that Maracis’ PowerBuilder-based solutions deliver. Today, Maracis’ NHS solutions are installed in NHS Trusts throughout the country and, with in excess of 30,000 users, currently handle over £1 billion of business each year. Forthcoming developments include Data Driven Service Oriented Architecture (DDSOA), browser-based Information Sharing Services and enhanced mobile integration for core NHS service requirements (see inside for more details).

Echoing Maracis’ philosophy, Sybase’s PowerBuilder Sales and Marketing Manager for Europe, Steven Dunn, commented: “Maracis combines superb technical expertise, detailed



knowledge of the NHS and a proven ability to deliver solutions to meet existing and future requirements. The solutions that they develop are recognised in the NHS as being best-of-breed and their ongoing development in DDSOA reflects their commitment to PowerBuilder and Sybase’s commitment to Maracis.”

“Storage of clinical documentation as part of the client record provides a considerable contemporaneous record. Especially valuable as this detail is gained from communications traditionally used within the NHS, and therefore reduces duplicated effort.”

Rafael Sorribas
Health Informatics Development Manager
Informatics Directorate
Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|---|
| Data Driven Service Oriented Architecture. | 2 |
| Browser-based Information Sharing Services. | 2 |
| The best clinical software in the country. | 3 |
| OMBH goes mobile. | 3 |
| NHS reaps PowerBuilder benefits. | 4 |

Data Driven Service Oriented Architecture

As a part of a development project for a local government organisation, Maracis continues to exploit the power delivered by PowerBuilder.

“With speed of delivery, flexibility and the power of a 4GL, we have radically rethought the way in which we build software,” explained Maracis’ Technical Director, Ali Mehmet. “We recognised that we could use PowerBuilder to design an application architecture that is ‘person-focussed’ and organisation-centric.”

Maracis’ Data Driven Service Oriented Architecture (DDSOA) is already in production, with Release 2 close to completion. DDSOA enables applications to be modified and customised by the manipulation of data – as opposed to source-code. This radical approach allows new application content to be released to end users without the need for a new build to be deployed.

“Significant usability advantage can be leveraged from the ability to specify and build bespoke organisation-specific views, without the need to agree those formats with system users beyond organisation boundaries,” said Rafael Sorribas, Health Informatics Development Manager at the Informatics Directorate, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.



“Added value comes from the ability to quickly change those formats to meet the demands of the NHS, without the need to undergo full application testing.”

DDSOA will revolutionise the way in which things happen. **“By modifying applications through the manipulation of data, we can deliver total flexibility and develop trust level solutions far more quickly and cost-effectively than would be the case with .Net, Java or even with conventional PowerBuilder,” added Ali Mehmet.**

For more information on DDSOA, please contact Maracis on 020 3228 4327.

“We have used Maracis since 1998, as a Patient Administration System and to deliver eCPA and statutory reporting requirements. More recently, we have been exploiting functionality such as the Document Management Centre and Patient Summary to deliver information to frontline staff at the point of care.

As requirements to share information with partner organisations grow, we look forward to working with Maracis to make the best use of available technology with the confidence that we will maintain the highest levels of security and confidentiality.”

Stephanie Colborne
IT Programme Manager
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

Browser-based Information Sharing Services



Initially developed to provide GPs with access to pdf documents generated from reports used by their NHS Trust, **Maracis’ browser-based information sharing services (ISS)** application has already generated substantial interest within the NHS – especially in Social Services, Accident and Emergency and other acute hospital services.

Allowing NHS Trusts to share a number of information **‘views’ with staff in partner agencies, ISS can include** any patient-centred report and as the information requirements of different agency types change over time, can be updated (or new reports built) to generate the necessary views.

ISS incorporates extremely powerful security features, ensuring that users are only able to access specific and pre-determined information sets. A patient search (by a GP for example) will only return patients that are registered with the GP practice and who have a current care spell on the Maracis database. Similarly, a patient search undertaken by staff within a local authority social services department will only return patients that are resident in the area of the local authority for which the agency account is associated.

For more information on ISS, please contact Maracis on 020 3228 4327.

“The best clinical software in the country”

Ferring Pharmaceuticals is devoted to identifying, developing and marketing innovative products in the fields of infertility, obstetrics, urology, gastroenterology, endocrinology and osteoarthritis. The development and supply of drugs for gastroenterology had always been a core business for Ferring and in 2002, the company decided to return value into the community by sponsoring the development of an application to support clinicians treating patients with Irritable Bowel Disease.

Professor Bardhan – Professor of Gastroenterology at The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust – had concluded that the discipline needed a computerised solution to allow clinicians to record the full range of information **concerning patients’ histories and treatments.**

With Professor Bardhan as consultant, Ferring approached an IT development company, planning to launch this new solution at the annual British Society of Gastroenterology conference in March 2003. However, with less than 4 months to go, it became apparent that the solution was nowhere near ready and was unlikely to meet the conference deadline. Recognising that drastic measures were called for, Ferring called on Bryan Archer – an independent consultant specialising in healthcare – and asked him to project manage the entire development to bring it back on track.

Bryan had already worked with Maracis. “Maracis had proved that they could develop effective information systems that combined ease-of-use with extensive flexibility,” said Bryan. “Although I knew that Maracis could produce the solution, it seemed almost impossible that they could do this within 3 months.”

Maracis diverted its resources to the development and testing of the Irritable Bowel Disease solution and to the delight of Ferring, were able to demonstrate the full solution at the conference. Not only had Maracis



completed the development on time, the entire development had been delivered on a fixed cost basis. Since its launch, the Rotherham IBD Management Software has been deployed in well over 50 UK health providers. Ferring provides the solution free of charge to all NHS clinicians, and funds ongoing development. The solution has undergone continuous enhancement since its launch with upgrades providing a wealth of new features as requested by the User Group.

“In my view, this is the best piece of clinical software in the country.” concluded Bryan Archer, “The solution continues to be installed in new sites and is praised for its applicability, ease of use and reliability. It is now an integral tool for clinicians, nurses and managers alike.”

OMBH goes mobile

The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (OMBH) provides specialist mental health services to people in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and the surrounding counties.

Already a Maracis customer, the Trust recognised that it needed to streamline the way in which community psychiatric nurses recorded and updated patient records during home visits, and provide nurses with the ability to produce reports without returning to the office; luckily a demonstration by Maracis of its web-based services brought this requirement into focus.

“As soon as the Trust saw the demonstration of our web-based services, they realised that it met their requirements,” explained Ali Mehmet, the Technical Director at Maracis. “Sybase gave us the ability to rework the original Visual Studio developed ASP .NET2 application as native PB11 and simply deploy it as a WebForm application.”

The pilot is currently underway, with access to the **services via Blackberry devices.** **“The functionality**



available via the mobile service provides information at the point of care delivery, in a simplistic, intuitive and easy to navigate format,” commented Rafael Sorribas, OBMH’s Health Informatics Development Manager.

“The capabilities of PowerBuilder mean that we can deliver solutions that meet the existing and future requirements of our clients,” added Ali. “With PowerBuilder, we can extend the application deployment in line with our clients’ requirements, quickly, cost-effectively and with no learning curves.”

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SYBASE®



Formed in 1998 by a group of people who had worked within the NHS in both software development and clinical positions and in the commercial sector, Maracis Solutions Ltd has a unique 'insiders' perspective on the National Health Service and on the needs of the people who work in it - especially clinicians.

Since its formation, Maracis has continually expanded its **customer base. Today, Maracis' solutions are installed in NHS Trusts** throughout the country and with over 30,000 users, currently handle £1 billion of business each year

As a medium sized enterprise, Maracis has a proven ability to respond quickly to market changes and customer requirements and boasts an unrivalled reputation in delivering complex and innovative solutions to extremely tight deadlines and within budget.

Maracis is one of the UK's leading developers of solutions built around Sybase's PowerBuilder technologies. From the outset, Maracis adopted PowerBuilder as its preferred development environment. With the launch of PowerBuilder 11, Maracis is poised to deliver even more functionality to the NHS, including the ability to deploy applications directly to the web without any of the costs in development, implementation, training and roll-out normally associated with such strategic changes.

For more information on Maracis and its cutting-edge use of PowerBuilder, please call us on 020 3228 4327, email us at sales@maracis.co.uk or visit our website: www.maracis.co.uk

"Maracis combines superb technical expertise, detailed knowledge of the NHS and a proven ability to deliver solutions to meet existing and future requirements. The solutions that they develop are recognised in the NHS as being best-of-breed and their ongoing development in Data Driven Service Oriented Architecture reflects their commitment to PowerBuilder and Sybase's commitment to Maracis."

Steven Dunn
PowerBuilder Sales and Marketing Manager for Europe
Sybase (UK) Ltd

NHS reaps PowerBuilder benefits

The NHS has been quick to recognise the benefits that Maracis' PowerBuilder-based solutions deliver. The advent of .Net and the demise of Visual Basic created substantial problems in NHS Trusts that relied upon business critical applications developed in Visual Basic.

"There is no migration path from VB to .Net," explained Ulrich Cox, Maracis' Director of Software Quality and Implementation. "Effectively that meant that core applications developed in VB had to be completely rewritten – an expensive and time consuming procedure that also impacted existing Trust working practices.

Our decision to adopt PowerBuilder from the outset means that we have been able to enhance all of our applications quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively, to the benefit of our NHS user base."