

Head of the Class

WSIPC



Information services provider for Washington schools improves partner collaboration and productivity with a common solution.

A public agency, Washington School Information Processing Cooperative (WSIPC) provides IT services to a cooperative of over 280 Washington state school districts. Specifically, WSIPC develops and licenses a suite of student, human resources, and financial management modules that enable federal, state and ad hoc data reporting. As part of services provided, WSIPC provides technical support and must also frequently modify its software to match Washington's unique mandatory reporting requirements which change from year to year.

Joe Towns, the Sr. Programmer/Analyst amongst 15 developers reports that WSIPC has been using Roundtable® Total Software Management System® (TSMS) for over 14 years. "We've had nothing but excellent success with Roundtable both internally and with our partner company, Skyward, Inc."



CHALLENGE

Managing customizations. Developing and supporting state-mandated add-on functionalities to Skyward products in sync with Skyward releases.

SOLUTION

Roundtable® TSMS, a Software Configuration Management solution for Progress® OpenEdge® development, allows WSIPC to manage their customizations and coordinate their release efforts with Skyward, also a Roundtable TSMS end user.

BENEFIT

WSIPC's customizations continue to appear as seamless add-on functionality to Skyward products while WSIPC experiences a 50% to 60% time savings.

WSIPC uses Roundtable TSMS for all source control and versioning and also for their release process and packaging. Town explains, “The way that it handles our source code in development is very helpful in being able to look at different objects and know who’s got what object checked out and what their changes were. The object history feature as well as the visual-diff tools are extremely powerful in allowing us to know exactly what changes were made to each version of an object and when those changes were made. Though we primarily use Roundtable for Progress source and WebSpeed objects, we also use Roundtable to track and version all our data manipulation and non-Progress code.”

Currently WSIPC is working in collaboration with Skyward, Inc. a national leader in ERP software development for K-12 schools on the development of enhanced point-and-click and now Web-based versions of their applications.

“We do a lot of customizations for our customers,” Towns reports. “We write state-specific code required for reporting, processing, and accounting within the state of Washington. What we write becomes seamless add-on functionality to Skyward’s products. We never change their production code but we have to release both their code and ours at the same time. So, being able to control and promote objects appropriately to meet our release time lines has been extremely useful.”

Town reports that using the Partner Load feature in Roundtable TSMS makes the task of coordinating efforts easy, “Because the Partner Load feature gives us full access to Skyward’s code, Roundtable has really allowed us to do a good job both seeing their releases and being able to develop our releases as theirs is released to us. Roundtable provides the perfect mechanism to dovetail our software changes into the releases we get from Skyward. Without Roundtable, that would be a very difficult to do.”

“We also do development for Skyward on their development server using Roundtable. Whenever one works in another company’s environment, there is an adjustment period, as developers learn the new tools and environment. Because Skyward uses Roundtable, we were able to hit the ground running with no impact to development productivity. This gives us that common environment to develop software successfully,” says Towns.

Before Roundtable TSMS, WSIPC used a home-grown source control system. “We always seemed to have problems with code getting lost or the wrong versions getting included in the release

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Senior Programmer & Analyst

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packages," explains Towns. "With Roundtable that's been all but eliminated."

When asked if he could quantify the difference that Roundtable TSMS has made to WSIPC's software development operations, Towns volunteered, "On a percentage basis, compared to previous systems that we'd been using, we're seeing a good 50 to 60% savings in time. Productivity is probably increased 30% to 40%. I can attribute a lot of this to the foremost benefit where Roundtable has helped us the most, which is standardization: everybody using the same tool doing things the same way. This, along with the reliability of the code versioning are two of the major improvements in our processes."

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TUGBOAT SOFTWARE

Tugboat Software is a leader in developing and supporting software applications for the demanding world of enterprise manufacturers and software development. Tugboat Software's products include Roundtable TSMS, a software configuration management solution for OpenEdge software development; Roundtable Team, a version control solution for managing ongoing changes to development projects; and SOS, a workforce scheduling solution. Tugboat Software is a Progress technology alliance partner and a QAD solution partner.

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