


FILNET CASE STUDY

District of Columbia State Education Office

Automated Data Collection & Reporting Systems of District of Columbia Public Charter Schools

CLIENT	 District of Columbia State Education Office (SEO)
PROJECT	Automated Data Collection & Reporting Systems of District of Columbia Public Charter Schools
WEBSITE	http://www.seo.dc.gov
TECHNOLOGY	Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), Student Information System (SIS)
DURATION	10.2006 – 03.2007

Overview

The District of Columbia (DC) State Education Office (SEO) promotes learning for District residents by providing access to educational information, resources, and services. The SEO guides DC constituents to opportunities with post-secondary grants and other educational support services, as well as policy analysis, research, and community outreach. The main functions of SEO include services, resources, policy, and oversight focusing on pre-kindergarten through post-secondary education and throughout every phase of life learning. Filnet was brought in to provide project management and analysis services specific to an SEO Charter School Program. The official program name is the Automated Data Collection & Reporting Systems of District of Columbia Public Charter Schools.

Challenge

In response to the Mayoral Strategic Goal of Making Government Work, the DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) has embarked on an initiative to implement citywide, web-enabled applications and provide consulting services to District and independent agencies. This initiative is a multi-year effort to transform the way the District Government conducts business by defining and implementing technologies for productivity improvement, cost reduction, revenue enhancement, and superior customer service. E-Gov

Services Program was established within OCTO to further the success of this initiative. OCTO is carrying out various projects for SEO—the Adult Literacy Project and the Charter Schools Project. These projects required Filnet technical analysis services and expertise in web applications to support the E-Gov Services Program team.

Solution

For the SEO Charter School project, the Filnet team consisted of a project manager and two senior business analysts. Filnet was responsible for the planning and coordination of all project tasks under the Automated Data Collection & Reporting Systems of District of Columbia Public Charter Schools project.

With strong knowledge of the District IT environment, the Filnet team conducted thorough evaluations of custom, government off-the-shelf (GOTS) and/or commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software products on the market to determine the suitability for the charter school project. Getting SEO the best return on investment was the primary objective of the Filnet team.

Filnet also interviewed individuals and facilitated group discussions with charter school staff members who hold various titles and leadership positions. Filnet drew on their feedback and presented reports as needed. Filnet also documented business processes, data collection methods, and local education agency management applications, and reporting systems. A key to the project success was assimilating information from a variety of sources including technical documentation, work flow diagrams, database schemas, regulations, and other information resources.

Filnet then developed a thorough questionnaire/survey, compiled and analyzed the results, and formulated a summary of the conclusions. Additionally, the Filnet team conducted market research on commercially available software products and new technologies designed to meet the varied requirements of the Charter Schools.

Filnet did research on service oriented architecture (SOA) that would tie in a student information system (SIS) with the Education Services Modernization Program (EdSMP). Using this SOA approach, the team researched various middleware products, such as SeeBeyond and Sonic, to see if such tools could integrate the SIS's with a longitudinal data warehouse. Additionally, the team was interested in whether data integrity products (e.g. Harte-Hanks Trillium Software®) could be used to guarantee data quality for archived student and school data. The overall requirements analyses recommended the use of the student interoperability framework (SIF) for robust data model and secure XML messaging.

In the end, Filnet evaluated new releases of software education systems and provide detailed feedback to SEO on the benefits and/or issues observed with that software.

Results

Drawing from their strong understanding of web development techniques and experience successfully managing and providing analysis service for web-based projects, the Filnet team was an integral part in helping to solve the business challenge of SEO, which is to research and recommend a Student Information System (SIS) for the DC Public Charter Schools. In the final stages of the project, the project manager compiled and presented the lessons learned, observations and recommendations, and outstanding issues in an official report to SEO. Filnet's recommendation may likely lead to the development of the Education Services Modernization Program (EdSMP).