

The Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) is a not-for-profit division of The Johns Hopkins University founded in 1942. Within APL, the Office of Technology Transfer has a stated mission to facilitate the transfer of APL-developed technology to business and industry to benefit the public, foster economic development, and benefit the University. Since the department's inception in 1999, two year cumulative performance statistics include: 269 inventions disclosed, 22 patents issued, 280 patent applications filed, 28 license agreements executed, 51 technologies licensed, 5 spin-off companies incorporated, and more than \$2.5 million in licensing income and \$3.5 million in related R&D funding secured.

Growing demands

After two years of an exceedingly successful start-up phase for the Office of Technology Transfer (OTT), OTT shifted into a Growth phase. Department performance, internal personnel and the market all supported the timing for this critical transition but the primary database system being utilized by the OTT to engage in their business was no longer an asset, as data integrity issues and performance issues became commonplace. OTT required a scalable system solution that would be their central repository and support structure for managing the multiple and complex data structures and relationships within their business – Technologies, Contacts, and License Agreements. The system needed to be intuitive, requiring minimal training, and would need to tightly integrate with other APL systems. Additionally, a comprehensive reporting infrastructure would be necessary.

Build vs. Buy

After careful review of the package software alternatives on the market and various services providers' offerings, OTT chose HMG Technologies to develop a custom solution for their needs. HMG was asked to lead all aspects of the project, from plan development through user orientation and rollout. HMG and APL worked together on an aggressive schedule that included several interim deliverables needed to meet office-wide objectives previously promised to the APL Technology Transfer Oversight Committee.

Rapid development - Rapid Results

Within four months, OTT went live with their new Technology Transfer Portal. A web-based platform, leveraging Microsoft technologies was chosen and the system includes features such as: support for document attachments directly to key database entities; comprehensive notes capture; ability to attach web addresses; link of structured internal data directly to external sites (ex: US Office of Patents & Trademarks for specific technology patent review); an automated posting / publication interface from the system to the APL public site; and an "event-based" architecture that provides for the foundation for automated triggers and work flow incorporation.

HMG completed a transfer of knowledge to the APL technical staff and the system has been made available to additional organizations, outside of OTT. The web-based architecture will additionally be leveraged once APL completes the setup of their Virtual Private Network (VPN) environment, thus enabling the application to be run remotely without any special configuration requirements.

Technologies

Microsoft Internet Information Services (IIS) 5.0; Microsoft Active Server Pages (ASP); Windows 2000 Server; COM +; JavaScript; MSDE database with upgrade path to SQL Server 2000; Microsoft Data Transformation Services (DTS); Adobe Acrobat; Crystal Web / Crystal Reports