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Regions Financial Automated Client Banking Statement Transformation System

A. Summary of Accomplishment

Electronic Banking Statements Access-The Problem

Regions Financial has staked out its territory south of the Mason-Dixon line. With nearly 700 banking offices in nine states, the holding company for Regions Bank is a top player in the South. In addition to consumer and commercial banking, it offers a variety of financial services, including mortgage banking (Regions Mortgage); credit life, accident, and health insurance (Regions Agency, Regions Life Insurance, and Rebsamen Insurance). Subsidiary Regions Interstate Billing Service factors accounts receivable and performs billing and collection services, primarily for the automotive service industry.¹

Regions Bank headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama with technical services located in Birmingham, Alabama generates their customers' banking statements in the traditional manner; namely by compiling transactional records by customer, including facsimile images of cleared checks, formatting in IBM Advanced Function Presentation (AFP)² in order to produce hardcopy statements for distribution via USPS to their customers.

This approach satisfies the basic fulfillment requirement, but was lacking the following features and capabilities.

- Customers must call for duplicate statements and days elapse before a request can be fulfilled. Re-prints of statements must be batched for subsequent processing
- Customer Service access to customer statements limited to transactional data only, not actual statements
- Customers cannot access their statements via the internet
- Regions repository of statements consists of AFP formatted data and hardcopy—no easy access or retrieval

¹ Microsoft Money – Company Report – January 29, 2003

² IBM & AFP are trademarks of the IBM Corporation and all rights are reserved.

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There was an additional problem. As a result of acquisitions, the banking statements generated consist of two distinctively different variants of AFP print streams. Any viable solution would have to be able to cope with both, transparent to the end user.

Electronic Banking Statements Access -The Solution

Regions Bank IT staff devised the solution that they wished to implement. CRTechnologies, Inc. was asked to provide the following functionality to their overall implementation:

- Ability to process both variation of AFP data to PDF format
- Process in an automatic non-user-intervention environment
- Provide statement manipulation as dictated by IT specification
- Provide specific PDF file-naming convention derived from statement content
- Create index file for PDF import
- Meet processing time constraints *without* the need to incorporate multiple server platforms
- Be able to process over 10 million statements per year, with each statement averaging 10 pages each.

Work on the solution commenced during the first week of September 2001 and all aspects of CRTechnologies' work were completed within 30 calendar days. Since its implementation, the depository of statements includes over 10 million statements and occupies 2.5 terabytes of storage.

Electronic Banking Statements Access -Step by Step

On a daily basis, datasets are transferred to the server where CRT's application software resides. As the datasets close, Over-Site Suite, CRTechnologies' flagship product detects their arrival and commences the conversion process. In this case, two (2) folders are monitored; one for each type of AFP print stream. All of these processes occur automatically, and no manual intervention is necessary. The actions performed by Over-Site are:

- Manages *multiple* threads of all processes, including the transformation process. In this instance, up to 20 threads are possible with 2 monitored folders.
- Splits resultant PDFs into individual customer statements
- Names PDFs based on variable data found within the customer statements
- Removes blank pages from PDF customer statements
- Inserts Regions logo on each PDF page of customer statement
- Inserts text blurb on first page of every PDF customer statement

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- Replaces form on last page of each PDF customer statement with a different form (The inserted form is in PDF format and may be creating with any application desired)
- Creates an index for each dataset to be used for database importing
- Counts statement pages and inserts it into a field in the index file for validation

Electronic Banking Statements Access Feature Summary

The Over-Site Suite offers the following standard features to Regions Bank for their Electronic Banking Statement application.

- No operator intervention is ever required. System boot and re-boot auto restart features are included.
- Automatic work file cleanup and maintenance
- A central log maintains a complete status of all major events. This log may be viewed from anywhere on the network.
- Intelligent dataset splitting & naming
- PDF manipulation
- Up to ten threads for each converter. Number of converters is virtually unlimited.
- Eliminates the need to own multiple licenses of costly transformation engines
- Maximizes the performance and production of a single server

B. Impact

Over-Site Suite and its ability to multi-thread all processes including the transformation engine, allowed Regions to implement an extremely cost-effective “state-of-the-art” solution to web-enable their customers’ statements. No planning or design time had to be spent with “load balancing” between multiple servers in order to achieve the processing requirements. As a result, a single server with multiple CPUs handles the load.

The system provides real significant monetary savings for Regions. Over-Site allowed Regions to minimize both the cost of hardware *and* software licensing. As volume increases, Regions simply needs to increase the number and/or speed of the CPUs with no need for additional software licenses.

The current daily production utilization time for *APL-AEL Request & Distribution System* is approximately two hours from start to all emails and reports delivered. This allows the current system to handle future requestor volume growth without any system enhancements for the foreseeable future.

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C. References

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