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– Jeff Averbeck
SMARTech CEO

SMARTech Integrates Enterprise Data Quality Platform to Consolidate Data Sets

Company

SMARTech Corp.

Industry

Internet Technology

Challenge

SMARTech is a leading provider of complex hosting, network services, and advanced Internet applications for enterprises that outsource their IT infrastructure. The company – whose parent firm is AirNet – provides a wide array of services including Internet connectivity, disaster and data recovery services, audio and video streaming, VOIP services, Web hosting, co-location, and broadcast email services.

For years, SMARTech/AirNet relied on applications developed by external vendors for their data hygiene, enhancement, and matching of data.

“Our previous vendor of data quality tools was a large software provider for whom their data quality tools were just another product off the shelf,” said Jeff Averbeck, president and CEO of SMARTech/AirNet. “Integration within our proprietary applications – and even use of their product – was only done by select consultants... there were limited resources and a shallow knowledge-base for the tools. Further compounding the problem was the instability within the ownership of the tools – the product having been purchased by three different companies (with different visions for the product) over the course of a few years.”

The company’s reliance on external vendors proved to be a challenge when implementing its smartCommunicator® product – a communication portal that allows individuals, businesses and agencies to share information from diverse sources – using a single, unified media platform. The company’s portal is designed to effectively deliver messages to its targeted audience.

About SMARTech

Chattanooga, Tenn.-based SMARTech is a leading provider of complex hosting, network services, and advanced Internet applications for enterprises that outsource their IT infrastructure.

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The main challenge? Integrating disparate data sources into a data-centric hub for the purpose of consumer and constituent engagement, Averbeck said.

It was essential to utilize a master data management solution that would successfully allow SMARTech/AirNet to gain a single, accurate, organized view of their customers by consolidating data across different data sources.

The company also needed a strong technical support team that would aid in the implementation of a master data management solution, and provide quick replies to any issue that would arise during the transition process.

Solution

Melissa Data's Data Quality Components for SSIS (DQC)

DQC is a complete enterprise platform that works within the SSIS data flow to deliver a wide range of data integration, transformation, and cleansing functionality including: profiling; parsing; cleansing; matching; and monitoring.

Benefits

DQC allows users to:

- » Leverage SQL Server Integration Services (SSIS) to profile, cleanse, and integrate critical information assets.
- » Parse, correct, and standardize data into a common format to build more consistent data.
- » Consolidate records within or across datasets to eliminate waste and provide a single view of the customer.

Results

SMARTech/AirNet's smartCommunicator portal features several modules to provide its customers with a more customized, interactive way to micro-target their audience. Several of the modules include:

- » **smartMailer** – Allows you to manage and send up to 5 million emails per hour and has a 95 percent or better deliverability rate.
- » **smartAnalyser** – Provides real-time analytics on which marketing tactics achieve the highest ROI.
- » **smartData** – Automatically cleans, standardizes, enhances, matches and provides change-of-address updates to client data through the upload process.

Melissa Data's DQC resides as the hub of the import tool for the smartData module within the smartCommunicator application.

"Name, Address, GeoCoder, Phone, and Email verification components, or transforms, are all put into action as each individual data upload is scrubbed and merged into a single, uniform data set – creating a single anchor record per individual from which our customers operate multi-million- record mass communications strategies," Averbeck said.

“The toolkit’s ease of integration has also expanded our ability to provide customer-specific, data-based applications – ensuring that all data entering the applications is uniform, standardized and cleansed.”

Averbeck said the choice for selecting Melissa Data’s DQC wasn’t difficult, as they were already familiar with the company’s other data quality offerings.

“Having worked with [Melissa Data’s] MAILERS+4 [postal automation software] in the past, we were familiar with the quality and ease-of-use that Melissa Data’s products offered,” Averbeck said. “Upon seeing the DQC toolkit – and how that toolkit resides within SSIS – our decision to adapt the tools to our application was an easy one. The knowledge-base for SQL Server applications is deep and wide. Unlike our previous solution, we had a vast team of SQL developers at our disposal – all of whom were easily able to adapt to and understand how the Melissa Data components fit into, and in fact, enhanced many of the applications we already had in place.”

Integrating DQC and adopting the enterprise platform into their organization’s workflow was seamless.

“Rather than spending countless sums of money on training and specialized staff, it has been a breeze getting staffers who are already familiar with SQL’s tools up and running with the new toolkit,” he said.

Averbeck added, “The Melissa Data customer service team with whom we have been teamed with (Crina Bigelow, Ira Whiteside and Carlier Lauer) – were instrumental in our decision to purchase the DQC toolkit. After dealing with an almost non-existent support staff for prior products, the ease and speed which we have received responses and answers to our questions has made the transition between tools easy.”

Ultimately, utilizing DQC proved to be a successful venture for SMARTech/AirNet.

“Processing data within existing SSIS jobs – rather than relying on unstable Web-service/ Command Prompt calls – has increased our productivity and greatly stabilized the application as a whole... DQC’s existence within the SQL Server Integration Services suite has enabled the company to build robust, stable ETL tools – in many cases, customizing data transforms to the specific needs of our clients,” Averbeck said.



About Melissa Data

Melissa Data is a leading provider of data quality, marketing and mailing solutions. Melissa Data helps companies acquire and retain customers, validate and enhance data, improve marketing ROI, and save money on postage and mail processing. Since 1985, Melissa Data has helped companies like Mercury Insurance, Xerox, Disney, AAA, and Nestle improve customer communications.

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