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Gathering and managing information at the operations level is a major corporate challenge.

Deficient information is a serious vulnerability. The opportunity for efficiency gain and competitive edge is enormous.



task assistant
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Microsoft
CERTIFIED
Partner

Welcome to task-driven information.
A new level of efficiency.

task assistant
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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'Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves or we know where we can find information upon it.'

SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1775

ENQUIRY-DRIVEN INEFFICIENCY

Dr Johnson was right when there was time to browse books, call on learned friends. Today, hard-pressed managers cannot be expected to know that critical corporate knowledge exists, let alone where to find it.

So time and resources are devoted to information management, usually at the document or database search level. It's enquiry-driven and produces isolated pools of knowledge around applications and activities. The software that runs it imposes rigid program structures that require established routines to be changed. And over time it produces data 'dumps' of little ongoing use, burying valuable corporate knowledge. The overhead is a cost, where a core of information should be an asset.

TASK-DRIVEN INFORMATION

In 1986 a group of IT managers, looking for solutions to the increasing complexity of global shipping operations, took the opposite approach and prescribed a task-driven information environment.

Within it, a program would act as an assistant to key staff, understanding their roles and goals. It would also know about all the information residing in the enterprise so that when a task was defined, it would marry the two. All the required information for the task would be retrieved. It could then share the assembled knowledge and the feedback from the task with all the other staff when they needed it. And it would continuously re-tune itself to current activities and applications, evolving with and supporting the organization's information requirement.

A SIMPLE, POWERFUL CONCEPT: TASK ASSISTANT

Today, Ulysses Task Assistant is established as the leading information management platform. Proven in the exacting ocean shipping environment, it is finding application in other equally demanding industries. Supported worldwide by Ulysses Systems professional services, Task Assistant will deliver the efficiency gains and competitive edge that successful business demands.



The information management challenge

A modern information system should understand roles and goals so well that it acts as a personal assistant:

- connecting users with all the electronic resources they need
- providing relevant and timely information from all available sources
- helping them manage all the information relevant to current tasks
- incorporating software and communications tools
- sharing knowledge and information with others who need it

It should do this without requiring changes in existing work procedures by knowing how people work and who needs the information. The result is an organization leveraging maximum efficiency from its corporate knowledge.

Most software dictates the way staff work. It requires established routines to be changed, just to comply with rigid program structures. Task Assistant takes the opposite approach, adapting to established work patterns, roles and tasks, 'understanding' them and their goals.

THE COMMERCIAL, OPERATIONAL AND IMPLEMENTATION BENEFITS OF TASK-DRIVEN INFORMATION

● FASTER AND BETTER QUALITY DECISION-MAKING

Task Assistant provides timely and relevant information to each user at the point of need, consolidated from all sources relevant to their task and role. All operational decisions are based on complete and up-to-date information, reducing timescales, errors and non-conformities.

● IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS

Task Assistant gathers, distributes and presents data and information to those who need it, when they need it.

● BETTER DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

New document releases and change requests are easily distributed to all staff, organized by their relevant task and role.

● SIMPLER COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES

Task Assistant's dedicated auditing facility reduces audit time and preparation costs.

● BETTER USE OF DATABASES AND SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

Task Assistant integrates existing data and software tools, providing users with direct access relevant to their current task.

● AUTOMATING INFORMATION STORAGE

Task Assistant reduces physical filing, delivering savings on staff time and resources.

● SMOOTH IMPLEMENTATION

No need to change procedures: Task Assistant adapts to existing ways of working.

● A SYSTEM THAT GROWS WITH THE ORGANIZATION

Task Assistant is fully scalable to match business growth, without heavy costs or loss of investment.

● QUICK FAMILIARIZATION OF NEW STAFF

Task Assistant's user-friendly design and intuitive information retrieval requires minimum training for new staff.

Task Assistant applications

OIL & GAS

A major challenge for the petrochemical industry is controlling plant operating and material management and logistics costs. Regulatory compliance that often required significant plant upgrades has eroded profit margins and created a greater need to monitor procedures. Ulysses Systems professional services provide the technology and business consulting skills to address operational inefficiencies and effectively manage regulatory compliance.

MANUFACTURING

Effective quality manufacturing management systems are driven by a formal continuous improvement program that includes policies, specified procedures and measurable goals. Task Assistant builds on current systems, policies and priorities. Implementing Task Assistant with the support of our consulting services ensures continuous, cost-effective and successful quality improvement.

PHARMACEUTICALS

It takes several years and a large project team to take a drug from initial research to commercial release. Visibility of compliance with the regulatory process is critical. Task Assistant gets the right information to the right people at the right time and in the right form, reducing the chance of non-compliance that can lead to delays and reduced profitability.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

From retail banking and financial products through business services to broking and trading, the financial services industry has one of the highest requirements for quality-assured environments. Regulatory compliance at all levels, high-risk trading and dependence on high-volume, high-security resilient systems are the day-to-day stuff of financial service operations. Task Assistant supports those systems across customer-facing, back office and corporate applications.

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

Planned maintenance programs are crucial to all transportation and logistics operations. Task Assistant can provide substantial savings in scheduling, unplanned repair procedures and in supporting audits. The ability of Task Assistant to link a user to all significant documents associated with a process improves efficiency and reduces errors.

HEALTHCARE

Ulysses Systems has the expertise to support health care organizations in quality assurance and evolving regulatory compliance programs, including project management methodologies and the application of Task Assistant. In the USA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act presents special challenges that can be successfully addressed with Task Assistant.

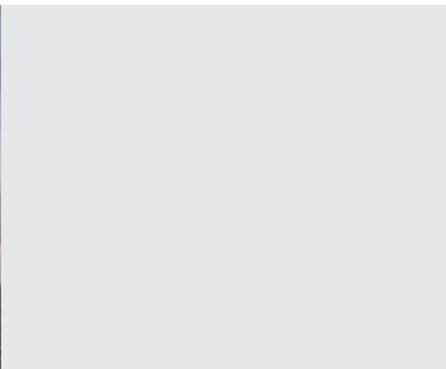
Implementing Task Assistant

Although Task Assistant is easy to use, it requires planning and expertise for successful implementation. Ulysses Systems consultants' proven methodology comprises the following stages:

- **BUSINESS PROCESS ANALYSIS** The first step is to define business operations as they will relate to Task Assistant, including who interfaces with whom, performing what activities; what information is required by whom, when, in what format; what are the current versus future business functions. Gap analysis and joint application design are activities that may be performed at this stage.
- **DESIGN** Based on the gap analysis and JAD sessions, new functions or roles may have been defined. At this stage, the specifics of how those functions work, the data formats, input and output formats, users, devices, etc are specified.
- **CONFIGURE** A standard part of every implementation is to define the roles and tasks, which users fit what roles, what data sources are required, what communications will be used, what manuals must be referenced, what contexts require which actions.
- **DEVELOP** Any new function or capability must be created. This will

typically involve some web development, object oriented language and often some type of report writing capability. The stage may be relatively short or long, depending on the level of customization necessary.

- **INTEGRATE/TEST** The configuration parameters are loaded and the customer-specific implementation is tested in a controlled environment. Any custom functions are tested separately and then as part of the system. After successful testing in a controlled environment, an initial implementation is done during the pilot stage, using a reduced number of users and locations. The pilot users are trained in the use of Task Assistant.
- **INSTALL** After the successful conclusion of the pilot, the plan is developed to add all users and all locations. Task Assistant is installed on additional servers in other geographies. All users are created in the system. Training is performed for all users directly or in a train-the-trainer fashion.
- **MAINTAIN** The first level support group is trained on how to support the users in using Task Assistant. The customer, configuration, and other relevant information is registered with the Ulysses Systems maintenance staff.



"THE CENTERPIECE OF THE CREW MANAGEMENT PROCESS"

"A ONE STOP COMPANY-WIDE INTEGRATED KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM"

Professional services

The consultants in Ulysses Systems Services Organization have experience in a wide range of technologies and use this expertise to help customers maximise their technology investment. Some of the areas of our expertise include the following:

ENTERPRISE APPLICATION INTEGRATION (EAI)

Typically, an enterprise has existing legacy applications and databases and wants to continue using them while taking advantage of new applications using the Internet and other new technologies. EAI involves evaluating how existing applications fit into the new view and then devising ways to efficiently reuse what already exists while adding new applications and data.

EAI encompasses object-oriented programming, distributed cross-platform program communication using message brokers, middleware, message queuing and other approaches.

DATA WAREHOUSING

A data warehouse is a central repository for the data that an enterprise's various business systems collect. Typically, a data warehouse is housed on a mainframe. Data from various applications and other sources is selectively extracted and organized on the data warehouse database for use by analytical applications and user queries. Data warehousing emphasizes the capture of data from different sources for analysis and access.

Prior to implementation in a data warehouse, data is not in the form nor does it have the connections to other data elements that users require for decision support. The data warehouse turns the volume of data into a storehouse of useful information for use in business functions. Data mining, web mining, and decision support systems are the kinds of applications that make use of a data warehouse.

The implementation of Task Assistant requires many of the same IT skills as

building a data warehouse and uses many of the same methods. Our consultants perform business analysis, data conversion, data cleansing, architecting and entity relationship design in implementing Task Assistant. They use the same techniques when building a data warehouse.

DATA ARCHITECTURE

For efficiency and reliability, data should be entered once. However, for business applications data must be used in a variety of ways. Intelligent data architecting must satisfy both input constraints and output needs, while providing required performance. The form, location, relationships and structure of data must be designed with the source and use in mind. Our consultants go through a similar process in implementing Task Assistant, with their experience in making data storage and retrieval fast and efficient.

NETWORK DESIGN & ANALYSIS

Task Assistant runs in many locations, using a variety of technologies. The communications between users may be local, wide area or wireless. We excel in complex network design and implementation. We also offer various levels of support including planning, designing, developing and deploying multi-vendor technology solutions.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM)

Knowledge management is a concept in which an enterprise consciously and comprehensively gathers, organizes, shares and analyzes its knowledge in terms of resources, documents and people skills. Knowledge management involves data mining and some method to push information to users. A knowledge management plan involves a survey of corporate goals and a close examination of the tools, both traditional and technical, that are required for addressing the needs of the company. The challenge is to select or build software that fits the context of

the overall plan and to encourage employees to share information.

Task Assistant takes knowledge management to a new level by making much of the collaboration transparent and by pushing the knowledge to whoever needs it, even before they know they need it.

INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN

Corporate systems today encompass various operating systems – Windows, NT, Unix, Linux – servers of various sizes, mainframes, network storage, various networking options, sophisticated input and output devices. Task Assistant is a broad-based application that is affected by the same technologies. Our consultants know how to design the technology infrastructure selecting the correct servers, storage, networks, protocols, and devices to ensure that Task Assistant and other applications provide the necessary performance and security, at the best possible price.

WEB DESIGN

Our Internet development professionals design sites using sophisticated tools that integrate traditional business processes

with appropriate Internet technologies and develop strategies to fully exploit the web's potential.

BUSINESS PROCESS ENGINEERING

Organizations must ensure that their business processes take advantage of the integration of information technology with advances in communications. The availability of low cost web-based distributed work groups can link together all elements of a supply chain. Exploiting this new technology is a Ulysses Systems strength.

APPLICATION MIGRATION

Ulysses Systems has designed, developed, tested, and implemented dozens of successful enhancements for custom-built software applications. We assess migration requirements and incorporate new functionality into the existing infrastructure in a way that does not require retraining the users. Our professional services team applies Task Assistant methodology, incorporating best practices familiar to the end users, and ensures that critical tasks and processes are easily repeatable and consistently applied throughout the organization.



"WE LOOKED AT A NUMBER OF PACKAGES BEFORE DECIDING THAT ULYSSES' TASK ASSISTANT PROVIDES THE BEST COMBINATION OF 'EASE OF USE' AND FUNCTIONALITY"