

Boone County

A case study from **mrc**

Boone County finds one solution that lets them accomplish many tasks using their current staff and skills.

The Basics

Boone County has a population of approximately 150,000 people and covers 691 square miles in central Missouri. The IT staff supports typical departmental county functions such as tax information, elections, law enforcement, etc.

The Challenge

Boone County's IT department needed to complement their character-based, green-screen reporting method with a web reporting solution. However, they faced a challenge: Their development staff consisted of 5 COBOL programmers and 1 web developer. Since bringing in new developers wasn't an option, they needed a reporting tool that would let their current developers build web reports quickly.

Before beginning their search, they first mapped out a few requirements:

- Unlimited licensing:** They didn't want the restrictions of per-seat/user licensing.
- Multiple database support:** Boone County uses both DB2 and SQL databases.
- Web-based development:** They didn't want any OS or platform limitations.

The Solution

Boone County went through a complete RFP process and examined many products, but found that most were very limited. However, one tool really stuck out to Aron Gish, Boone County's Director of IT. That tool was m-Power, a web application development tool created by mrc. What Gish found interesting about m-Power was the fact that m-Power was more than a report writer. He realized m-Power could be used for many projects, both now and in the future.

But most importantly, m-Power fit all of their requirements. According to James Barnes, Boone County's web developer, "After going through the RFP process it was clear that m-Power's ability to exist outside of the iSeries environment, access data across many platforms, provide rapid WYSIWYG development, and function in an all-web based environment just blew the competition away."

The Value

They purchased m-Power and built all the reporting applications they needed as well as many other web applications. Overall, m-Power helped them in a few distinct ways:

They accomplished their goals using their current staff and skills
They were able to build all the applications they needed without bringing in new staff or learning new skills. Their COBOL programmers can now develop basic web apps without learning new programming languages. Additionally, their end users can now do their own ad-hoc reporting.

They solved many problems with one tool
What began as a search for a reporting tool ended with multiple problems solved. Besides web reporting, they've used m-Power for many other projects. For example, they built an electronic pollbook (ePollbook) application that replaced physical voter registration books at a recent election. They also built simple web applications for maintaining their current databases, as well as an HR application that lets people apply for jobs online.

They saved lots of time
"It really saves a lot of time," says Gish. For example, the ePollbook project only took them 300 hours to complete. By comparison, they estimate it would've taken at least 1,000 hours using other methods.

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