



Huttig Uses DataDirect ODBC to Reliably Publish Mission-Critical Data over the Web

Goal: Access huge volume of sales and operations data among disparate systems, including legacy Progress databases.

Why they chose DataDirect: DataDirect ODBC drivers were a key enabling technology for creating a common work environment among 60+ work sites and five different production systems. The DataDirect driver was the only one out of the drivers they tested that actually worked without timeout problems.

Business benefits: Helped reduce the cost of doing business because of the huge timesaving realized by automating updates to customer data.

Technical benefits: Reliability and scalability for publishing huge volumes of data. Ease of use.

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Ken Morrill
Director of Financial Operations
and E-Commerce,
Huttig Building Products

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For more information on Huttig, go to:

<http://www.huttig.com/>

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Everyone knows customer data is a company’s most important asset. But when you have a global company doing millions of dollars of business over five different systems, how can you bring all that data together, and then feel confident it’s accurate?

Huttig Building Products is the largest distributor of building products in the U.S., with annual sales over \$1.2 billion. One of Huttig’s biggest successes this year was the launch of an intranet site that provided a common work environment for its 60+ sites and five different production systems, plus two proprietary ERP systems. DataDirect’s ODBC driver for Progress was a key enabling technology for accessing the huge volume of sales and operations data among its disparate systems. Two of the company’s systems from NxTrend, Inc. have roots in legacy Progress databases, which represent a large share of the business volume.

According to Ken Morrill, Huttig’s director of financial applications and e-commerce, “We had no single platform that we could use to control all the systems. DataDirect’s ODBC driver helped us do this by publishing data to an intranet site. The intranet site provides the only ‘common card’ from all five ‘decks’ that everyone could play from. The ODBC driver was key for us to be able to do that.” Added Morrill, “We had looked at another ODBC driver and it was a simple decision because the other one didn’t work. We had too many timeout problems with running it over the web site. It flat out just didn’t accomplish what we needed.”

Morrill also commented on how easy it was to use the DataDirect driver, “There was no learning curve. Once it was in place we were able to use all of the standard tools we already use. It was easy to go to bat for us.”

The new platform represents a huge timesaving for the company. Explained Morrill, “Before, we had no single vehicle for synchronizing the data between these systems. Updates were being made over phone conversations and email. Now the changes being made are consistent, and we don’t have redundant work – taking information off one computer system, writing it down or typing it in, and then sending it to someone else to type it in. It’s 100% automated.”

Driver facilitates synchronization and auditing of data

The product also made it possible for Huttig to synchronize data among the systems effectively. Explained Morrill, “There might be five or six tables required for lookups for a single customer record. A remote user makes a change to a record, and the application on the intranet site uses the driver to pull the information from the different tables, populate it on the screen, make the updates, and send it back to update the database.” The DataDirect ODBC driver made it easy for Huttig to accomplish this type of exchange over a web site.

Huttig is also relying on the DataDirect drivers in auditing tools to maintain the master file data and monitor changes to it. Said Morrill, “Everything we do has to have an audit trail. Even for simple things like changing a customer master record. We have to know who did it, the reason, and what was changed. When

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you have that happening over fax, email or a phone conversation, you lose the ability to have a controlled environment.” By replicating production Progress data into a SQL Server database, Huttig’s IT team was able to create a number of auditing systems to help them view file transfer activity between the systems. “When this central data is extracted and put into web format using the ODBC driver, it gives us a powerful tool for monitoring key data on a daily basis,” said Morrill.

The goal of a centralized computer system is an ongoing conversion process for Huttig. The team has an aggressive goal to combine all these systems by the close of the year. In another application, Huttig is using the DataDirect driver to pull information from disparate systems for its accounts receivable system. Accounts receivable is shared by all five systems, with hundreds of data feeds, representing millions of dollars, going back and forth on a daily basis. The DataDirect driver enables the application to pull all that information up to a single level where Huttig’s IT team can view it. Said Morrill, “Now we can see the success or failure of the daily activities between the systems. It’s providing a way to balance the data between all those systems.”

As Huttig acquires new business, the use of the web-based tools will be invaluable. Future plans call for publishing financial data from its legacy Progress database to its customers via the public web site. Adds Morrill, “As those plans come to fruition, the DataDirect ODBC driver will be a significant piece of that technology.”