



MKS Toolkit Case Study

logica

Logica Taps MKS Toolkit for Water Utility Application Port

Software integrator and systems house Logica has a solid reputation for working closely with the water industry. Its MC2000 telemetry solution enables water utilities - and gas companies, too - to collect monitoring and measurement data from remote sites around broad-spread catchment areas in real-time. For example, a water company with numerous reservoirs many miles apart will be monitoring each one for chemical levels, water levels, leakage, etc. The combined data provides controllers with an instant picture of exactly what is happening around the catchment area - enabling sufficient quantities of clean, healthy water flowing into our taps.

The scale of deployment of MC2000 is large - Anglian Water uses it to provide approximately 300,000 points of information from 7,200 sites - and is therefore suited to a heavy-duty, UNIX platform. Although Logica has many satisfied customers, the company made a decision to develop a 'lighter', Windows version of MC2000 to run in parallel.

"We felt that there was another market that would be keen to deploy a scaled down version," explained MC2000 Product Manager, Robert Longson. "District-based water companies need to measure their assets in the same way, but on a smaller scale. Obviously, their operational budgets are also smaller than the 10 main water 'PLCs' in the UK - so a smaller scale version of MC2000 available at a lower cost, and running on a Windows PC would be very attractive to them."

Logica's first step was to undertake a thorough evaluation of available porting tools. From the outset, re-writing the code was not a viable option: it is a complex program, managing the companies asset base in real time at over 7,000 sites. Logica was reluctant to build it again from scratch, and jeopardize any proven functionality or integrity - and this also would take too long to bring to market.

Strong Support from Scientific Computers

"Our analysis showed that MKS Toolkit for Enterprise Developers (formerly NuTCRACKER), a UNIX to Windows porting tool from MKS Inc., was clearly ahead of the market. It was the only alternative we seriously considered," confirms Robert Longson. The evaluation process showed MKS Toolkit for Enterprise Developers to be extremely flexible; for example it allowed Logica to use Win32 native timers in the UNIX code - something no other porting tool could offer and crucial to a real-time telemetry system.

Before the practical evaluation of the tool began Scientific Computers, the master reseller for MKS Toolkit in the UK, spent a day with Robert's team at Logica planning the trial port. "This was invaluable to us," says Robert "And the evaluation was made even easier by the thorough reports we had drawn up at the outset. We knew exactly how we wanted the Windows version of MC2000 to function, so we could provide precise expectations of the product to Scientific Computers. It made everybody's task so much more straightforward".

"Inevitably, there were a few minor teething troubles as the port began. Proactive support from Scientific Computers soon addressed these. During the port only one real problem was encountered - that some pre-set limits restricted our ability to have 150 plus tasks running simultaneously. We were very impressed that this was so easily solved by Scientific Computers, who ensured this was fed into the next release of MKS Toolkit. The product is evolving within proven customer requirements." Graphical tools were also tailored to ensure that the required Command Line utilities were available within Windows.

Windows Sale Already Achieved

The decision to deploy MKS Toolkit was soon made by Logica, and so MCLite was born. The port was quickly achieved, without any compromise on quality or integrity. "We are pleased to report that the first sale - to an Irish county council -



was made within a few months of the project's completion. Once the 'flagship' deployment there is complete, we are confident that many other companies will be eager to use MCLite too," reports Robert.

Because the two versions, UNIX and Windows, still share the same source code, there is also potential for larger water companies who already use MC2000, to run the streamlined Windows version alongside. Indeed, an Australian utility is currently evaluating the 'new' product to complement its existing MC2000 system. A two-handed deployment provides both a macro and a micro view of assets, without any compatibility issues or data mismatches between the two systems.

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