



News Company Communicates With InfoChannel

Worldwide Information Broker uses Scala Software to Get Messages Out Internally

PRINCETON, NJ – One step inside any of this financial news empire’s offices and anyone would feel a sense of information overload. The huge corporation was built on stock traders being able to access as many numbers as possible at a given time with people monitoring up to eight screens on a single desk.

As the business quickly spread across the globe, the needs for community and solidarity became more and more prevalent. Corporate communications was a new top priority to keep everyone in touch with each other, and it was the IT department’s job to visually network each office together using dedicated corporate communications screens in every location around the world.

“We’re not talking about one building! We’re talking about more than 100 offices around the world,” says their director of information technology. “Scala saved my life.”

They wanted a way to be able to economically transmit and display everything from simple bulletin board messages to employee home videos updated on the fly.

Soon the COO’s vision of an international corporate communications channel was born, powered by Scala software. Only Scala’s InfoChannel 3 software suite has the ability to meet their intense requirements of literally 3,000-4,000 updates per day across 100+ offices from Paris, France to Lima, Peru with a new city coming online every week.

Controlling that many displays in such a diverse group of locales requires any corporate television deployment to be prepared for a wide variety of networking demands. To satisfy this need, the company chose Scala’s InfoChannel 3 software suite, specifically designed to create, manage and control large dynamic signage networks.

Using a single server running the Enterprise Edition of Scala’s InfoChannel Network Manager 3, the IT director has grouped the monitors at remote sites, each managed and controlled by Scala’s InfoChannel Player 3 software, by key demographics such as the amount of bandwidth available and the desired regional content. Their headquarters utilizes the satellite multicasting that was already available, while other more remote offices depend on terrestrial networks or even dialup lines. All of these remotely located Scala InfoChannel Players are easily controlled and maintained in groups by the IT director through Scala’s web-accessible interface to the centrally located InfoChannel Network Manager Server.

“Central management, rapid development of content, ease of use, and the ability to scale – that is the power Scala provides.”

Three different authors in New York, London, and Tokyo create the media-rich, broadcast-quality content seen worldwide. Using multiple copies of Scala's InfoChannel Designer 3 authoring software, they publish the content directly to the centrally located InfoChannel Network Manager Server, which in turn disseminates it to the appropriate InfoChannel Players driving the remote screens. Using Scala's Windows Scripting support, the IT director then wrote a simple application in VBScript to allow secretaries at every office to update a welcome screen for visitors and information on local meetings in real-time.

Bandwidth requirements are kept to a minimum due to the store-and-forward design of Scala's InfoChannel 3 software suite. Content delivery to Scala's InfoChannel Players located in each remote office can be scheduled to occur in off-peak hours and is piggybacked on top of their existing IT network infrastructure and then saved locally at every office. In addition, the Scala InfoChannel architecture is such that only the actual changes in the media-rich content (often only textual changes) need to be retransmitted to each of the remotely located InfoChannel Players that will merge in the changes and render the new content on-the-fly. All this keeps the IT department happy due to the resultant low bandwidth requirements when compared to any other dynamic signage solution available today.

Of course in a network of this size, the company invested in a backup server and can be up again within minutes should a problem ever arise. The built-in health monitoring of Scala's InfoChannel Network Manager also ensures that the IT department is immediately notified of any service outages that may occur at any remote location.

Scala's InfoChannel Player software physically located at each remote site, typically runs on an unmanned PC and is specifically designed for 24/7 operation – it is continually monitored by the InfoChannel Network Manager software running on the centrally located server. “Although I've never had a Scala InfoChannel Player crash,” admits the user, “if it ever does, it would reboot automatically.”

However, out of all of Scala InfoChannel 3 features, the most important for the IT department was never even mentioned on a sell sheet – a good night's sleep.

“We don't get calls in the middle of the night saying it doesn't work, so we're happy.”

About Scala, Inc.

Founded in 1987, Scala pioneered the cable TV industry with software and services to allow users to create localized channels inexpensively. Today, Scala has grown to lead the corporate communications, retail dynamic signage, and interactive kiosk industries as well. With an unrivaled software suite to handle authoring, networking, monitoring, and logged playback, Scala has been the choice of tens of thousands of customers worldwide. Built on reliable and flexible network architecture, Scala software can support nearly any existing infrastructure from dial-up to LAN to Wi-Fi to satellite and terrestrial-based multicast networks. Scala's powerful and efficient store-and-forward design allows the control of unique content on a single cable headend or thousands of remote displays or kiosks from a single desktop PC without the constraints of streaming video.