

Xoserve—Supercharging Data Enquiry Services for the UK Gas Industry

The regional networks that comprise the natural gas distribution industry in the United Kingdom operate in a regulated environment that has mandated a lean, efficient and constantly improving competitive market. The nature of the gas networks services, combined with close regulatory oversight, demands robust and responsive IT systems. In 2005, the largest five gas network businesses created a shared transactional service provider, Xoserve, to provide secure, reliable and quality data management services to the UK Gas market. Since its founding, Xoserve has repeatedly turned to Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to design, build and support IT solutions, which have evolved with the complexity and scope of Europe's dynamic energy market.

About the Client

Xoserve is the transactional nerve centre of the UK's natural gas distribution industry. It manages all the key data associated with the 22 million gas supply-points nationwide, as well as the registration and customer-switching services for the industry. Xoserve also manages the energy allocation and invoicing on behalf of gas transporters and manages change to all centralised processes and systems.

Client
Xoserve

Industry
Utilities

Offering
SAP Practice

“The data enquiry solution has met and exceeded expectations of both Xoserve and its customers in what is a pivotal service in enabling one of Europe’s most competitive Gas markets. By providing highly effective IT solutions, Xoserve can make a significant contribution to the efficiency of the UK Energy market”

Steve Adcock

- head of IT investment and solution delivery, Xoserve

Business Challenge

Xoserve was providing its legacy IAD service (Internet Access to Data) to the UK gas market through an aging browser-based system for specific user groups like networks, shippers, suppliers, meter asset managers, independent gas transporters and consumers. The IAD host infrastructure was beginning to pose operational risks and lacked the agility and performance to meet future demands. Meanwhile, new regulatory mandates for better transparency and change management was driving Xoserve’s requirements for increased customer satisfaction, as well as reducing operational costs and accommodating of additional users and user groups.

The situation called for an all new data service, dubbed “Data Enquiry,” with a challenging agenda of business requirements:

- Support 20,000+ industry users with concurrent accessibility for 500 users.
- Simple search queries could not take longer than 2 seconds from “enter” to display.
- Complex, multi-role data security was imperative to ensure industry compliance.
- As Data Enquiry is a user pay service, the industry customers’ usage metrics—such as data volume accessed, number of user hits, number of user accounts—must be recorded to enable cost transparency.
- The new system had to be highly configurable to provide the desired future change agility.

TCS’ Solution

Xoserve worked in partnership with TCS to design, implement and host the new Data Enquiry service infrastructure and application platform, based on SAP BusinessObjects Enterprise (BOE) and SAP BusinessObjects Data Services (BODS). BusinessObjects already formed the core of Xoserve’s data warehouse system and its inbuilt functionalities continued to fit the company’s requirements. To meet Xoserve’s customers’ evolving data demands, the new system would provide an e-platform for existing Data Enquiry services and support change arising from both the smart metering revolution and European and UK market reforms.

Within the first 20 days of the engagement, TCS identified portal solutions built on the BusinessObjects reporting tool, executed proofs of concept and showcased it to Xoserve’s project team and stakeholders. TCS designed the core business logic for the web screens and data security using BusinessObjects Universe and Web Intelligence reports.

“The level of information provided is a dramatic improvement, while the speed of the site is very impressive.”

- British Gas

“System layout is excellent, more information available and much easier to navigate. Using the system is self-explanatory, so very little training will be required.”

- npower

Experience certainty

True certainty of success comes from working with a partner you trust to provide the insight, support and expertise that will propel your business forward. Experiencing certainty with TCS means you can count on results, partnership and leadership.

Results

The new Data Enquiry service, Europe's largest, was built and hosted successfully within 23 weeks. In fact, the complete system was made available one month before go-live, which enabled a pre-production run, which led to a flawless implementation and smooth post-implementation support. TCS' solution has enabled cost reductions through the following enhancements:

- A solution based on Xoserve's existing SAP infrastructure, which accelerated and streamlined the build and testing cycles
- A 21% reduction in the volume of monthly phone traffic
- Shared infrastructure and a hybrid onsite-offshore delivery and support model
- Xoserve's customers—a 20,000-strong user base of British gas industry professionals—are enjoying the increased number of data elements, improved performance, stability and ease of use, enabling them to better serve their own customers. Specific user benefits include:
 - Intuitive platform with simplified user interface (no rollout training was required)
 - New functions and services, such as full meter asset details and meter-reads information
 - Increased level of access to data for other industry-wide stakeholders, increasing data transparency across the marketplace
- Improved levels of live and historical data available from core systems
- Flexibility to introduce additional data items or screens to react efficiently to changing business requirements
- Fail-over and resilience arrangements to ensure recovery and continuity of service

“The system is user friendly and easy to understand. Screen layout and navigation is straightforward and having the meter reading and meter mechanism data available is very useful, saving both time and cost to our business.”

- E.ON

About TCS Enterprise Solutions for SAP

Across two decades, as a Global Solutions Partner, as collaborator and as co-developer, TCS has acquired a unique understanding of the value of SAP enterprise solutions and of how to best mine that value for each client’s unique environment, infrastructure and business requirements. Our special access to SAP organizations, expertise and stakeholders makes us frequent participants in SAP Partner Acceptance Testing, contributing TCS thinking to SAP design. At the same time, this relationship with SAP allows us to develop product expertise in advance of product launches.

Contact

For more information, contact global.marketing@tcs.com

About Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

Tata Consultancy Services is an IT services, consulting and business solutions organization that delivers real results to global business, ensuring a level of certainty no other firm can match. TCS offers a consulting-led, integrated portfolio of IT and IT-enabled infrastructure, engineering and assurance services. This is delivered through its unique Global Network Delivery Model™, recognized as the benchmark of excellence in software development. A part of the Tata Group, India’s largest industrial conglomerate, TCS has a global footprint and is listed on the National Stock Exchange and Bombay Stock Exchange in India.

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Outsourcing

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