

Umeå Energi: future-proof

with Enterprise Document Presentment and Integration

New billing system triggered integration project

Umeå Energi like many other companies uses a range of different business systems with each one connected to one or more of the others by means of unique integrations. When a decision was made to implement a new billing system the question of systems integration was also raised.

Umeå Energi needed a new strategy for a number of reasons:

- high cost of development when systems were changed or replaced
- it was difficult to maintain the right level of knowledge of different technical platforms
- customer information was key to success but different systems had inconsistent data
- new requirements, such as web-based communication and e-business, had to be met

Umeå Energi started a project together with Know IT Candeo, an IT consultancy firm. The project comprised of four main phases: documenting existing systems integrations, defining the strategy for future integrations, developing an integration platform, and developing services to cover integration needs.

- We aim to contribute to customer success by making solutions with long-term responsibility, says Åke Eriksson at Know IT Candeo. The task to build a new platform for system integration together with Umeå Energi was both stimulating and challenging.

Service Oriented Architecture

When it came to the integration strategy it was clear that a service-oriented architecture with standardized internal formats all managed using the Service Broker was desirable. In that way, a modification or replacement of a certain system would only impact that specific system's connections to the Service Broker. All other connections to other systems managed by the Service Broker would remain unaffected. StreamServe Enterprise Document Presentment (EDP) was set up with a number of services, covering applications such as electricity network information, remote meter reading, project accounting, external CustomerWeb and the new billing system, as well as external communication such as PlusGiro, print-shops and sub-contractors. One important aspect that was taken into account was the reliability of data delivery. The solution is thus set up to make sure deliveries are made in spite of any temporary impediments, such as network or server unavailability. A status handler service manages error messages.

Document Presentment

Using StreamServe EDP, Umeå Energi also implemented a common platform for Document Management, gaining even more flexibility by separating document data from design, format, and distribution channels.

When it comes to customer invoices the solution covers local printout, the use of a print-shop, EDI invoices and E-giro Internet invoices. For the latter, invoice information is sent to Bankgirot and at the same time a PDF original is archived on a local web server at Umeå Energi. Bankgirot sends invoice information to the customer's bank. When the customer logs onto their Internet bank the invoice number and PKI key allows for the PDF original (stored at Umeå Energi) to be viewed.

What has been achieved?

Umeå Energi now feels confident that it has a strategy covering current and future needs for both system integration and document presentment. New requirements within the area of web-based communication and e-business can be met, which is crucial in a competitive market.

An important and very real benefit of the solution is its role as facilitator for the change of billing systems, as well as the increased efficiency in all integration work. This represents considerable cost savings and lets the organization be more in control.

- Overall we have a very complex environment with over 40 different systems. With StreamServe we have managed to take control over all integration and reduced the cost for modifications, says Niklas L Johansson, CIO at Umeå Energi. He explains that Umeå Energi is more independent of suppliers now; they can work with systems integration on their own terms, and it is also very easy to get an overview of the whole IT-platform.

- I am very pleased with the solution and it has paid off in a short time period, Niklas L Johansson concludes.

If you missed out on the webinar you can still watch the recorded version!

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