



SaaS Solution Provider Leverages Open Source Business Intelligence to Reshape Service Management

The Company

Privately held Yarris Pty. Ltd., based in Melbourne, Australia, provides fully hosted, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions that help organizations manage large-scale services critical to their operations. Employing a unique solution suite and platform, the company serves industries requiring efficient management of large numbers of discrete units of work.

Through its highly configurable SaaS platform, Yarris helps government agencies, utility operators, insurance carriers and a range of other organization types to optimize the time, cost and quality aspects of contractor and internal service provider performance—achieving measurably improved business results at levels not previously possible.

Helping organizations manage services.

For many organizations, managing a large pool of disparate service providers is critical to business success. From auto insurers with millions of claims to process to telecom utilities with thousands of pieces of equipment to maintain, these organizations face a common set of challenges: to ensure large numbers of tasks are performed properly, in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Most such operations generate—and depend on—large amounts of transactional data, centered on work orders, service orders or some logical equivalent. This data must often be shared among organizationally and (frequently) geographically separate entities. Processing auto insurance claims, for example, involves data shared among claims adjusters, repair shops, dismantlers and others; and even some of these parties may outsource some of their involvement—and the data sharing requirement along with it—to additional entities.

This large and growing need for information sharing—led Yarris to pursue a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) architecture as it developed a sophisticated solution for managing—and optimizing—these kinds of services.

FAST FACTS

ORGANIZATION

Yarris

INDUSTRY

Services Management Solution
(SaaS-based)

SOLUTION

Yarris Field Services, Yarris Insurance Services, Yarris Legal Services

RESULTS

Client data and busy Yarris development resources both set free, boosting client satisfaction and solution value. management initiatives – along with reduced churn.

“We’ve had bank COOs personally using our reporting tools. That’s the kind of access and power our clients expect—and JasperServer lets us deliver.”

Jeremy Forrester
Chief Information Officer,
Yarris

Unlike many SaaS-based solutions, however, the Yarris application must accommodate large transaction and user loads. “Our solution is truly enterprise scale, and has to be highly configurable,” says Jeremy Forrester, the company’s CIO. “Some organizations use it to manage legal services, while a utility manages activities like digging trenches.” These companies must measure and track services delivery in different ways, with different workflows, and measure them against different kinds of performance goals, key performance indicators and service level agreements.

The solution currently supports a huge user community, including more than 20,000 service providers in addition to managers, executives, analysts and others within Yarris’s client organizations. Each year, approximately 700,000 service units—work orders, if you will—pass through the system, representing about \$1.5 billion in value to Yarris’s clients.

The importance of data access.

While the SaaS model is well suited to a large user community and extensive data-sharing requirement, it raises the importance of strong Business Intelligence (BI) capabilities. “Our clients and prospective clients are happy to trade software and hardware maintenance hassles for the shared data environment we have,” says Forrester. Those clients are comfortable, in part, because of the robust security and other SaaS-focused functionality built in to the Yarris solution.

But there’s an important caveat: the large quantities of operational data captured by the solution must be available for reporting and analysis by Yarris clients. “They can’t manage these activities and find ways to optimize them unless they have good access to the data that’s been captured,” explains Forrester. “If they can’t report it, there’s not much point in capturing it.”

To enable historical analyses and meet other key requirements of some of its clients, Yarris keeps 10 years of service order data online and available for access, and the data structures are complex; single order typically requires hundreds of different data rows.

As a multi-tenant, SaaS provider, Yarris certainly can’t hand over its database to a client for analysis; the database contains data for all of its clients. That’s why BI is such a priority—so, early on, Yarris began developing a reporting capability for use by its clients.

Choosing a BI solution.

Yarris’s choice of BI solution was influenced largely by its own technology architecture. Most of the Yarris technology consists of custom-built Java applications operating in a J2EE environment, so an open standards-based, all-Java BI solution made sense. To keep costs low and stay focused on its core expertise, the Yarris team chose the open source JasperReports library, using it to generate the wide range of reports its clients required.

CASE STUDY

As Yarris's client base grew, and as their needs became more sophisticated, a large number of reports had to be developed and maintained by the Yarris team. "Our clients could schedule reports, but that's about all," says Forrester. "We had to define, evolve and maintain them."

It was time to add to the solution's BI capabilities—so that Yarris could give its clients the means to define and change reports, as well as schedule them. Any additional data access features it could offer would also be warmly welcomed, and would enhance the value of Yarris's solution.

The team didn't have to look far. "Yes, we could have considered proprietary BI solutions," says Forrester. "And we considered for ... about a half-second." With the availability of JasperServer Professional, Yarris would be able to add complete report serving capabilities to its solution—in addition to ad hoc query and in-memory analytics functions—while retaining the open source advantages of low costs and a large, supportive community.

"It also helped us keep the timeline short and get the new capabilities to market quickly," says Forrester. "And given the open architecture, we knew we would always have the option of looking at other products later on."

Scalable, Flexible Business Intelligence

To enable high-performance, complex reporting without affecting performance of the transaction system, Yarris built a separate, Oracle-based data warehouse environment and schema for use with JasperServer. The warehouse is refreshed at varying frequencies depending on the nature of the data: for example, service order data, which grows and changes constantly, is refreshed every 15 minutes, while more static performance target data such as KPIs and SLAs might be refreshed once every night, or even weekly.

While Yarris has customized the standard JasperServer web user interface with its logo and color palette, it has left other UI aspects essentially unchanged. "We wanted to leverage everything Jaspersoft has done," says Forrester. JasperServer runs inside a Tomcat instance, extending the open source aspects of the implementation.

Yarris clients access between 15 and 30 standardized reports in order to track and manage services, and handle scheduling on their own. Many clients also opt for JasperServer's ad hoc query, and have created hundreds of additional reports in various forms, both scheduled and on-demand.

When Yarris implemented JasperServer 3.0, it did not yet offer multi-tenancy features. To ensure adequate security, controlled access and other key capabilities, the Yarris team customized the JasperServer code with its own multi-tenancy features, using about two person-months of effort to complete the task.

Later, when JasperServer 3.5 was released complete with robust multi-tenancy features, the Yarris team adjusted its custom code – eliminating much of it—to take advantage of those features.

Results

Adding JasperServer Professional to the Yarris Services Management solution has freed up the internal Yarris technology team – as well as the application’s data. “Our core development team can focus on other items now,” says Forrester.

Now, Yarris clients have ultimate control over what their reports contain, when they run, and who has access to them—all with no need for the Yarris support team to be involved. “We’ve gone from a very rigid, scheduled reporting to open access for our clients and the end users they serve,” Forrester adds.

The improved reporting has important benefits for Yarris, whose clients, forced to deal with a large number of different service providers, come to them in search of transparency. “Reporting is an important key to the sale for us,” says Forrester.

“Ours is a much richer solution now,” he continues. “By offering immediate data access, and the ability to run reports at will, and define new ones, some graphically rich—and all without our help—our solution delivers much more value to our clients.” Some of the most gratifying feedback has come from clients using JasperServer’s ad hoc query features.

Forrester sums up. “We’ve had bank COOs personally using our reporting tools. That’s the kind of access and power our clients expect—and JasperServer lets us deliver.”

About Jaspersoft

Jaspersoft’s open source business intelligence is the world’s most widely used BI software, with more than 11 million product downloads worldwide and more than 12,000 commercial customers in 100 countries. Jaspersoft provides a web-based, open and modular approach to the evolving business intelligence needs of the enterprise and is the only BI vendor enabling true multi-tenancy while providing a common platform for on-premise, virtualized, SaaS and Cloud deployments. Jaspersoft’s products span the continuum of core BI requirements, including reporting, analysis, dashboards and mash-ups, data analysis, and data integration. Its BI software is updated constantly by a development community of more than 150,000 registered members working on more than 350 projects. For more information visit: www.jaspersoft.com and www.jasperforge.org.

CONTACT US

Asia Pacific, Japan, Australia/NZ

36th Flr., CRC Tower,
All Seasons Place
87/2 Wireless Rd.,
Lumpini, Phatumwan
Bangkok 10330 Thailand
Email: sales-APAC@jaspersoft.com

Jaspersoft Headquarters

539 Bryant Street, Suite 100
San Francisco, CA 94107
1-888-399-2199
Phone: 415.348.2380
Fax: 415.281.1987
Email: sales@jaspersoft.com

www.jaspersoft.com