



MKS Toolkit Case Study

Cobe BCT

Cobe BCT develops medical equipment, specifically for a pheresis (a machine that separates blood). Cobe's system was developed using a mix of technologies and environments but the majority of work has managed to fall mostly into the UNIX environment.

Currently the company uses HP workstations and servers for a great deal of its development software/hardware etc., but Cobe is also moving internally to a more Windows based environment, including NT servers, workstations and (hundreds) of machines. With other parts of Cobe moving more and more towards Microsoft Windows, the R&D department finds itself moving between the two worlds quite often. Word processing, spread sheets and other applications such as mail are already in the MS Windows world. Since a large part of R&D's job is documentation of the software it develops, it needs to use Word to be portable within the company. This has presented a problem for Cobe BCT: development remains in the HP/UNIX world, while documentation and other business functions now sit squarely in the Microsoft Windows world.

The onset of cheaper, more powerful PC technology and better operating systems now makes it possible for Cobe to move its development to the Windows environment.

In this case, however, one challenge has been replaced by another. While Cobe BCT is now able to move development to the Windows world, saving costs and achieving a more heterogeneous technology environment—it still has to recognize that most of its legacy applications (applications that run the core of the company's business) were developed for the UNIX environment (lex, yacc, awk scripts...).

One option was to totally switch development environments and rewrite the legacy applications. This choice is much too costly in today's ever-changing world of software development. Choice number two, is to keep moving ahead as the company had done, and leave development split between the two platforms. This choice is acceptable in the short term, but not for long term development.

The company turned to MKS Toolkit for Developers (formerly MKS Toolkit) for the third and best option. With MKS Toolkit, Cobe BCT can integrate the two platforms by using a legacy UNIX application on the Windows platform without immense amounts of incurred cost. Now instead of jumping between environments, or rewriting applications that have stood the test of time, Cobe's R&D team can concentrate on new product development.

Using the MKS Toolkit prevents Cobe from re-developing tools it has been using for years. Rewriting these tools for a new platform would cost tens of thousands of dollars, not to mention many engineering hours to develop and RE-VALIDATE. Validation of tools and software is often a major investment, especially when the government is involved. Now, Cobe is also looking at using MKS Source Integrity (software configuration management) to round out the entire process.

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