



A Web Service Sprouts Great Benefits at Bluegrass

For more than a decade, BASIS has propagated the ease and benefits of hosting a Web Service with BBj®. Today, there is still no easier or better way to communicate, share data, and invoke functionality between disparate systems written in different languages and running on different platforms.

So, have you grafted a Web Service into your app yet? Perhaps you haven't considered it or thought of a worthwhile application, or perhaps you have thought about it but put it off until you had stronger motivation.

Take a close look at how one BASIS customer sowed their system with a Web Service that sprouted great cost savings and tremendous increase of productivity.

Look at Bluegrass

Meet Bluegrass Family Health, a managed care corporation, with a tremendous records processing load. With such a high volume comes an even higher need for accuracy in correct coding. To meet that need, Bluegrass chose to implement "ClaimCheck" from McKesson, America's oldest and largest healthcare services company. ClaimCheck is a proven and widely-used comprehensive medical claims coding and review software system that audits claims for correct codes and to assure that the proper payment rates are applied. Bluegrass shared in the industry's regard for McKesson's off-the-shelf ClaimCheck solution as "best-of-breed" and wanted to join the many other insurance companies who use this system.



By Susan Darling
Technical/Marketing Writer

Look to Web Services

While ClaimCheck is a Windows-only product, Bluegrass runs DIAMOND 725 in PRO/5® completely on AIX RS6000 UNIX so they needed a dependable cross-platform solution that interfaced equally well with UNIX and Windows. Web Services does just that, seamlessly using modern network protocols without the more archaic method of hopping files over FTP.

Bluegrass called upon their BASIS reseller EMS, led by President Dave Cominsky and Software Developer, Karin Parker, and together they began looking into the process of implementing ClaimCheck into Bluegrass's enterprise system. The first step was to write the BBj code for consuming the Web Service so they reached out to BASIS for assistance. BASIS Engineer Brian Hipple provided sample BBj code to guide them through the process. Basically, their software solution, DIAMOND 725, would send the claim data in XML format to the ClaimCheck server for verification. Once verified, ClaimCheck would then process the data and generate a response to update the claims in DIAMOND 725.

While they were writing and testing the BBj code, Bluegrass IT Director Preston Gorman was busy defining and customizing rules that the ClaimCheck code review software would follow to validate claims and remediate errors. Gorman explains,

"For example, let's say a maternity claim comes into the DIAMOND system but is actually billed for a man. The extract process pulls all claims and then sends them to the ClaimCheck server to look at the codes and any related rules such as "claim type=maternity" and "gender=male". We had to define the server's response when it identifies this particular claim and the rules for how to respond...whether to reject the claim and request re-submission, whether to deny the claim, or whether to adjust the gender to female."

Bluegrass Family Health, a subsidiary of Baptist Healthcare System, is a not-for-profit managed care corporation based in Kentucky that offers both fully insured and self-funded services to commercial employer groups. Their provider network is made up of hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and doctors. <http://www.bgfh.com>

Bluegrass Family Health

Gorman continues,

"Before ClaimCheck, we used code review software that generated reports of these types of errors for our staff to review manually and decide what to do and hopefully resolve correctly. Now, adding our own rules and intelligence to the huge library of rules 'tried and true' in other larger health plans, we can rest confidently on the thoroughness and accuracy of this process. It's totally automatic...100% hands off."

Accurate and automatic; this new process delivers great cost savings as it ensures correct coding. In addition, it flags bills that might be coded inadvertently with a more expensive billing code or in a manner determined to be unethical or fraudulent.

What has been the impact of consuming this ClaimCheck Web Service? Gorman answers,

"It has helped us a great deal by delivering a simple and effective architecture in which we could interface two very different applications. The Web Service helped us integrate the operation of a BBj environment in a uniform manner with an application built entirely on Microsoft technologies in a virtual environment. The result has been a great improvement in the number of claims that we can audit automatically and accurately."

Look Back

The original scope of the project was to integrate with McKesson's Web Service and to migrate the enterprise entirely to BBj. To do so also required taking the time to test the core components - CRM, billing, eligibility, and batch import/exports, to name a few. This was a huge undertaking that required more time and resources than were available.

As a result, Gorman discovered and now quickly advises others in the BASIS community to identify the scope and stay focused on that goal.

"As we began this project, we lost track of the narrow scope of developing the Web Service interface and deploying it. If we had decided early on to run a dual-environment for a while before migrating the entire environment over to BBj, I think we could have been up so much more quickly and easily."

Look Ahead

While national healthcare is still reforming, Bluegrass is taking a wait-and-see approach before prioritizing their next steps. Currently, their wish list includes moving ahead with migrating their entire enterprise to BBj and implementing some other key Web Services.

One Web Service of great benefit would be an EDI (electronic data interchange) system that provides XML wrappers in addition to the old X12/ANSI format to facilitate delivery of files to their ultimate destination in the proper format. Another great application for Web Services would be a real time connection between claims payment data in their DIAMOND application and their clinical management in another McKesson product. Currently, the clinical management data is batch processed nightly for real data "every 24-hours." A true real-time connection would allow nurses in the field to see up-to-the-minute claims history and clinical management data as they pre-authorize procedures and answer questions about medical care that a patient is about to receive. That patient may have seen the doctor that day for a procedure or filled a prescription moments earlier so the nurse and other health care providers could now make a good medical decision based on accurate and recent clinical activity. This would be a major win for both the patient, who deserves the best healthcare; and the provider, who wants to give the safest and best healthcare possible.

The next step in migrating their full enterprise to BBj would be to move their database from PRO/5 to BBj. While this is a relatively small step, the return is huge. With their data in a BBj database, Bluegrass could immediately access triggers and/or replication to bring that real-time data to their clinical management system, without the need for a third party solution. Simply put, every time data is modified, added, or deleted, a trigger would replicate that change to their clinical management system, keeping them in sync.

Summary

Harvesting a bounty of benefits may just be a simple Web Service away. Regardless of how fertile the environment or recent your BBx® generation, a Web Service may be the answer to taking your application to a point of greater return. While you too may desire a complete overhaul into BBj, take Gorman's advice and keep the scope simple and focused, to begin sampling BBj bounty earlier in the process. Then sit back and enjoy. Happy harvesting. ■



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