

RESULTS

- Achieved greater visibility to support audit compliance
- Saved management time with reusable reports
- Saved nearly 40 hours to clear 300 duplicate tickets
- Linked business and IT for innovative collaboration and development



CHALLENGE

- Streamline change management process
- Accelerate analysis and routing of help desk tickets
- Improve tracking of audit-based change requests and development budgets

PRODUCTS

Serena® Business Mashups
Serena Dimensions®

INDUSTRY

Government



CUSTOMER FOCUS

Stewards of change

U.S. Forest Service's I-Web Program standardizes on Serena Business Mashups for end-to-end visibility and improved collaboration between business users and development staff

With roots reaching back to 1876, the U.S. Forest Service administers 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands as an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Among other duties, field personnel construct and maintain trails, patrol wilderness areas, protect culturally significant heritage sites, and study the ecosystems of the national forests and other federal, state, and private lands.

Supporting 33,000 employees, the U.S. Forest Service's engineering division is home to an extensive application development, hosting, and support team. These applications drive day-to-day business at forests and facilities nationwide, including permits for harvesting timber, minerals, and more. "We are responsible for more than 50 modules and applications across all branches of the forest system, including development, testing, hosting, and change requests," says Paul Clemens, assistant program manager of the U.S. Forest Service's I-Web Program. "Beyond bugs

and enhancements, we also handle technical assistance for the applications, including helping business users understand how to collect information, change data, and make mass updates."

A lack of repeatable, auditable processes exposed the organization to regulatory risks that if left unchecked could result in political and budgetary consequences. With separate physical systems supporting the help desk, management reviews, and code development, there were insufficient audit capabilities for any given issue as it traveled through the change process. Worse, the changes requested by internal and external auditors after an audit weren't easily tracked throughout the course of the year. "We had 13 audit-related activities last year," explains Clemens. "Showing that we've addressed those issues by the next fiscal year is a top priority."

Managing requests through three systems meant excess complexity and wasted time

"Harnessing Business Mashups as our single tool to route issues has meant an incredible simplification of our work process."

- Paul Clemens, Assistant Program Manager,
I-Web Program, U.S. Forest Service



during the change analysis process. To monitor performance against scope of work, employees had to manually process information from all three systems. The U.S. Forest Service expects to receive more than a billion dollars in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and wants to ensure those dollars are wisely spent. "It's critical that we are good stewards of public funds," says Clemens. "One way we can do that is by improving efficiency as change requests are routed from business units through development."

U.S. Forest Service consolidates with Serena

Clemens and his team began assessing options to modernize the U.S. Forest Service's help desk, looking to add more robust capabilities along with more comprehensive tracking. "As we explored our options, it was clear that a fully integrated software suite would provide the best cost/benefit," says Clemens. "Since we were building on a Serena PVCS code repository, upgrading to Serena Business Mashups and Serena Dimensions offered the most integrated solution, reducing and minimizing risks. When we saw firsthand how we could customize processes, we could see immediate benefits."

The U.S. Forest Service launched Serena Business Mashups in July 2008 as the foundation of its Business Application Services Environment (BASE)—a single system to manage the change request workflow for more than 3,700 issues including bugs, requests, and changes. After an issue is created, it goes to a business specialist who decides if a change is needed or if the issue is a duplicate. If

action needs to be taken, the issue then goes to a change request analyst, who works with management to prioritize it against other issues or assign a budget. From there, change requests are routed to a technical lead who uses Dimensions to assign tasks across an extended development team. "Harnessing Business Mashups as our single tool to route issues has meant an incredible simplification of our work process," says Clemens.

To accelerate implementation, the U.S. Forest Service worked with Serena Federal Services. "Serena has a successful history with government agencies," says Clemens. "We relied on Serena Federal Services for both consulting and technical assistance during implementation."

Serena Business Mashups supports end-to-end visibility

As the core of a simplified change management process, Serena Business Mashups has given the U.S. Forest Service better visibility into its change process. "We no longer have to manually compile information from separate systems," says Clemens. "I'm confident we've eliminated blind spots that could cause issues in future audits." The same comprehensive issue tracking will help the U.S. Forest Service improve spending tracking and keep jobs on budget as changes enter the development cycle.

Serena Business Mashups supports reusable reports that help the U.S. Forest Service accelerate compliance with audit requests. Once reports are compiled, they can be quickly updated or run again to save management time. "We use Serena

Business Mashups to track and validate the changes so nothing falls through the cracks," says Ann Hough, BASE coordinator at the U.S. Forest Service.

Eased management saves nearly 40 hours to clear 300 tickets

Consolidating to a single system and standardizing change request workflows has enabled the U.S. Forest Service to link and associate related issues, eliminating time previously spent clearing duplicate help desk tickets. "Supporting 40,000 end users across the country results in hundreds of calls for even minor issues," says Hough. "While it used to take as many as 40 hours to clear 300 duplicate tickets, Serena Business Mashups lets us update the original record and close all duplicate tickets in a single step—a huge time savings."

Improved communication streamlines development process

Ultimately, Serena Business Mashups has improved collaborative innovation at the U.S. Forest Service, streamlining the development and change management processes. Through a simple, intuitive interface, business users and even some external partners can work with help desk staff to accelerate the analysis and routing of issues to the appropriate teams. Before changes enter production, business owners must give final approval to ensure that the change was processed correctly. "By speeding change management and reducing re-work over time, the collaboration we've achieved with Serena Business Mashups means the U.S. Forest Service is working more efficiently and the government is spending its dollars more wisely," says Clemens.



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