

Tyler Cooper & Alcorn boosts productivity of its attorneys while slashing IT infrastructure costs

Rippe & Kingston and IBM bring 21st Century IT infrastructure to the legal industry

Overview

■ Challenge

Tyler Cooper & Alcorn managers wanted to continue to expand, while allowing its partners to do what they do best – practice law.

■ Solution

They switched from a Microsoft® platform to a tightly integrated legal software suite (LMS V) from Rippe & Kingston that runs on all IBM middleware (IBM WebSphere®, Lotus® Domino®, and IBM DB2® Universal Database) using the IBM @server™ iSeries™. This allows them to team in ways that were not possible before, not to mention cost and resource reductions and virus and failsafe protection.



■ Key Benefits

The productivity of the attorneys has increased; the system has not gone down at Alcorn; they are one of only a handful of firms that have a true fail-over/disaster recovery solution; the IT and management support to maintain the system is the lowest in the industry; and they can easily add many new features each year, such as a new intranet/extranet and a Web portal, to be added this year.

“For the past 150 years at Tyler Cooper & Alcorn, we have had more partners and fewer associates than most large law firms because our experienced partners take satisfaction in performing their clients’ legal work. With our R&K and IBM solution there is no reason we can’t continue that course – while expanding our presence regionally and nationally – for the next 150 years.”

Barry Winnick
IT director and practicing attorney
Tyler Cooper & Alcorn

Benefits

Benefits provided by IBM and Rippe & Kingston Solution

- Law firms can realize up to 45 percent in savings over a Microsoft® solution; a solution that is more flexible, scalable, and one that provides true disaster recovery. In addition, Lotus Notes and Domino running on the iSeries is a rock solid combination that allows many core legal software applications to be tightly integrated without creating an IT colossus of server farms. And it is all highly resistant to virus attacks with a true disaster recovery capability.

Benefits realized by Tyler Cooper & Alcorn

- The productivity of the attorneys has increased; the system has not gone down; they are one of only a few firms with a realistic fail-over/disaster recovery solution; the IT and management support to maintain the system is the lowest in the industry, and they can easily add many new high productivity features yearly such as an intranet/extranet and a Web-portal this year.
-

Tyler Cooper loves the virus protection, the uptime, and the lack of worry about security breaches of the R&K and IBM solution.

Tyler Cooper & Alcorn, LLP is one of Connecticut's largest law firms. With about 70 lawyers in offices in New Haven, Hartford, Stamford and Madison, Tyler Cooper provides a full range of legal services to businesses and individuals, including commercial litigation, banking, business services, labor and employment and trusts and estates.

Keep growing and serving clients

Tyler Cooper's challenge is to keep growing and serving clients regionally and nationally, while adhering to its centuries-old philosophy of having their experienced partners personally perform, instead of direct, their clients' legal work. It is no coincidence that nine of its partners are listed in The Best Lawyers in America, a national directory of attorneys most often named by surveyed lawyers as the ones their families would turn to in a crisis.

Tyler Cooper's IT infrastructure plays a key role in maintaining the continuity of that philosophy. The firm uses LMS V (Legal Management System V) — a tightly integrated "single e-business software suite" of 15 practice support applications developed by Rippe & Kingston, an IBM Premier Business Partner and ISV (Independent Software Vendor) based in Cincinnati, Ohio. This e-business software suite was developed using 100 percent IBM middleware: IBM WebSphere, Lotus Notes and Domino and DB2® Universal Database® — IBM's mission critical SQL database.

And the list goes on

Tyler Cooper evaluated a Microsoft solution for two years, using Microsoft Outlook on Windows NT® clients and a Microsoft Exchange server, but Barry Winnick, attorney and director of technology, said, "We found it couldn't compare to the reliability of Lotus Notes and the workflow built into Notes to handle meetings and other collaboration tasks. These are the kind of tasks that Notes developers have been running and perfecting for over five years." Winnick also said he didn't need separate servers for accounting, mail and document

management as he did with Microsoft — plus, when Notes does need a reboot for maintenance reasons, Winnick can do a virtual reboot on a Notes database without turning off the IBM @server iSeries.

“I can sleep at night . . . “

“With Microsoft, every time you turn around, you need another server,” said Winnick. “We’d need about seven just for document management, we’d need two or three more for email, and another three to five for financial systems.” Finally,” said Winnick, “I can sleep at night with the iSeries, it’s not going down, and I don’t have to worry about managing a ‘farm’ of separate servers. It’s all in one highly reliable small mainframe.”

Winnick also said the pricing for a Microsoft solution doesn’t even come close when you look at licensing fees for all those servers. In addition, he said, IBM DB2 is included in the price of the iSeries. And Winnick goes on to say that the iSeries is well into the eighth release of its 64-bit operating system. He said he doesn’t know of any other manufacturer who comes close to that record.

What does it all mean?

What does all that mean for Tyler Cooper & Alcorn as a law firm? Plenty! First of all, the system is easy to manage. Winnick has enough time left over to continue practicing law. With just one person in Hartford and another in New Haven entering billing information, plus an accounts receivables clerk, they run the whole system. And the system is keeping track of more than 100 people at the firm who bill their time. Disaster recovery is no longer a topic that sends shivers down everyone’s spine. It was virtually impossible to back up all PC servers at Tyler Cooper & Alcorn before, said Winnick. After an upgrade two years ago, the firm’s retired iSeries in Hartford became the back up for the entire system. Tyler Cooper can be up and running without missing a beat, or a single digit of data.

Rippe & Kingston

Rippe & Kingston is a Premier IBM Business Partner and part of the ISV Advantage Initiative - a program designed to provide ISVs with technical and marketing support to help meet the specific information technology needs of small and medium business (SMB) companies.

Rippe & Kingston also is on a mission. The company is the major IBM Premier ISV serving the legal industry, and it has a powerful story to tell. The ISV is selling into the legal market, which is 75

More about Rippe & Kingston

Rippe & Kingston was founded in Cincinnati in 1976 by George Kingston and Joe Rippe for traditional CPA practice, tax consulting and audit. Today, they have over 100 staff members and 200 clients with offices in Cincinnati, OH, Fredericksburg, VA, Atlanta, GA and Wilmington, DE. R & K has three separate businesses: a complete CPA practice, a technology consulting business, and a professional services (legal, consulting, CPA) software business. The professional services software group grew up on IBM mid-range platforms, starting with System/34, System/36™, the AS/400®, and now eServer iSeries. “The iSeries is a great multi-application machine,” said Ron Sharp, President of Rippe & Kingston, LLC. “With logical partitioning, it can become a SAN (Storage Area Network) not just for Microsoft apps, but for Linux, Domino and WebSphere as well. And it’s impervious to virus attacks because it stores data in one area and executables in another.”

percent controlled by the Microsoft Corporation and its collection of "Microsoft Village" ISVs who write legal-based applications exclusively for the proprietary Microsoft platform. "It's amazing," says Paul Truax, director of consulting services at R&K, "The legal industry is years behind the average Fortune 500 company but you can't tell that to a law firm's IT director or anyone on the IT staff. They don't want to hear about change or anything that will challenge their position. But, if you can break through to senior management, you've got a very interested audience."

A simple, powerful story

"Our story is very simple, and very powerful. If you use our highly integrated single e-business suite of legal applications along with the IBM iSeries and IBM middleware, you can save your law firm up to 45 percent in IT costs and cut the IT staff by as much as 50 percent. And, you'll have a system that is much more flexible, scalable and responsive – not to mention about 100-times more secure against virus attack."

R&K has been crisscrossing the United States with IBM to tell this story, and they are making headway. Now more than 200 clients are enjoying the benefits of an R&K set of legal applications built on a solid and responsive IBM infrastructure. It's part of IBM's Global Initiative Program, which brings the latest IT infrastructure used by banks, airlines and Fortune 500 companies to outlying market areas. The IBM team, which has now visited more than 25 major metropolitan areas in the U.S. and Canada, consists of Truax, regional IBM iSeries specialists, Mary Bendik, one of the Web designers for "Front Office" applications and a Web tie-in to IBM's iSeries briefing center staff in Rochester, MN. They are called upon to demo the dynamic IT management capabilities of these unique small mainframes.

Let's do the math

Here's the incredible math that is blowing away staunchly held competitive positions in law firms across the country. For a 100-attorney law firm, a typical PC solution requires about 15 separate servers and an IT staff of 10 to 12. By switching to R & K's LMS V, the highly integrated e-business suite for law firms, which is based solely on IBM middleware, the Microsoft farm of servers can be reduced down to one iSeries for primary and one for fail-over/disaster recovery. The IT staff can be reduced from 10-12 to typically 3-4.

Fat clients mean thin wallets

And the complexity and cost of this unsustainable PC network rises

"Our story is very simple, and very powerful. If you use our highly integrated, e-business legal software suite with the IBM @server iSeries infrastructure, you can save your law firm 45 percent in IT costs and cut the IT staff by half. And, you'll have a system that is much more flexible, scalable and responsive – not to mention about 100-times more secure against virus attack."

Paul Truax,
director of consulting services
Rippe & Kingston

from there. "We are finding really bloated PC software on the desktop," said Ron Sharp, President at Rippe & Kingston, LLC. "For a law firm, we're talking about 10 to 15 layers of software on each and every PC in the law firm. And most of these applications are written by totally different Microsoft Village ISVs. None of these products work with each other. Some are 32-bit applications, some are only 16 bit. Some are Web-enabled, some are not. And of course they all 'look and feel' different, causing training to be unique for each separate piece of software. The whole design is just not stable, let alone secure."

In addition, Windows®-based applications usually need help in supporting client-server traffic over a wide-area network, according to Sharp. That means Citrix® servers have to be brought in just to handle this wide-area networking requirement. In a 100 attorney law firm with 25 servers, about five more servers are needed just to tie together the branch office locations using Citrix. The PCs in the branches need Citrix licenses at \$500 per desktop and the support for this extra infrastructure creates another requirement for the IT staff!

With R & K's LMS V, the e-business suite of legal applications, the software is written using IBM's WebSphere and Domino Web-based tools, Citrix is not needed and the desktops only average three layers of software, Sharp added. This makes for a substantially easier environment to manage for the IT staff.

"Killer apps and technologies"

A typical law firm will use three different kinds of legal application software products, and R&K has them all. First, there are document and knowledge management applications for creating legal briefs and pleadings, coupled with plain old word processing documents and full text searches. Then there are groupware programs for sending e-mails and maintaining calendars and address books. And finally, there are programs to handle legal practice management, which includes time and billing, records management, conflict avoidance and financial management. R&K has written them all using IBM middleware, allowing them all to run on a single IBM @server iSeries and requiring only a Web-Browser or Web-enabled desktop client. It's a single server coupled with a back-up/disaster recovery server for all of a law firm's applications, which is much easier to operate and maintain.

IBM @server iSeries is the secret weapon

"But our secret weapon is the IBM @server iSeries," said George Kingston, co-founder of Rippe & Kingston. "If we go in and ask a

Key Components of the Rippe & Kingston Solution at Tyler Cooper & Alcorn

Software

IBM

- IBM Domino and Lotus Notes
- IBM DB2 Universal Database

Rippe & Kingston

- LMS V (Legal Management System V), the e-business integrated suite of legal applications

Hardware

- IBM @server iSeries
-

managing partner to tell us about their IT pains, they will often zero in on one of the three key application areas. So, we go after only that one area, and with the iSeries, with separate logical partitions, we can incorporate everything onto one physical server. We can coexist with everything that's out there including the Microsoft application that the client may have purchased six months before. The iSeries supports Microsoft Windows®, Linux, IBM AIX®, Unix®, Domino, i5-OS and other IBM middleware-based solutions. It's a very open box. And right off the bat, the firm's IT woes are cut dramatically. For example, for the first time, the firm will have a simple 'fail-over' strategy. The iSeries can easily back up everything on its disks to another iSeries, but that's not even remotely possible with a welter of specific PC servers. IBM's

@server iSeries is platform independent and more open to different kinds of software.”

Delighted customers

“Then, in one or two years, we go back in again”, said Kingston, “and guess what, the firm’s management is so delighted with the performance and cost of the new and more open design, they want to talk about porting everything over to R&K programs on the IBM iSeries-based infrastructure.”

“Our goal is to grow Tyler Cooper & Alcorn’s practice,” said Winnick, “and that means growing the network without growing staff. Well, the R&K/IBM solution is helping us do that and then some. And we love the virus free environment, the 99.997% uptime, and the fact that we have no security breaches.”

For more information

Please contact your IBM Sales Representative or IBM Business Partner. Or you can visit us at: ibm.com/e-business

For more information about Tyler Cooper & Alcorn please visit: tylercooper.com

For more information about Rippe & Kingston please visit: rippe.com/

For more information on ISV success stories, visit the new IBM Success Story Web Page on the IBM ISV/Developer Relations site at: ibm.com/isv/library/devbrief.html.



©Copyright IBM Corporation 2004
IBM Corporation
Corporate Marketing
New Orchard Road
Armonk, NY 10504
U.S.A.

Produced in the United States of America
8-04
All Rights Reserved

IBM, the IBM logo, AS/400, e-business logo, e (logo) business on demand, eServer, iSeries, DB2, DB2 Universal Database, Domino, Lotus, Lotus Notes, System/36, and WebSphere are trademarks or registered trademarks of IBM Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Microsoft, Windows and Windows NT are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Other company product or service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

This case study is an example of how one customer and Business Partner use IBM products. There is no guarantee of comparable results.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.