

The Seattle Times reports improvement on bottom line with Progress®-based payment processing application.



## CASE STUDY

### CHALLENGE

The Seattle Times needed to move its infrastructure into the 21st century in order to provide real-time payment processing to its more than 500,000 customers.

### SOLUTION

Integrate its ePay payment processing application into all of its business processes by providing a seamless two-way connection between the newspaper's .NET ePay system and its mainframe.

### WHY PROGRESS® SOFTWARE

The DataDirect® Shadow® z/Services product provided all of the features, capabilities, and performance they needed without expensive programming and development overhead costs.

### BENEFIT

Credit card transactions are processed and customer records are updated in real-time, enabling the company near real-time realization of revenue, improved customer service, and reduced transaction processing fees.

### THE COST OF BATCH PAYMENT PROCESSING

One of the challenges facing the Seattle Times, a newspaper with a 110-year history and a circulation of over a half-million readers, was to bring its payment processing system into the twenty-first century. With its old payment processing methods, credit card payments required overnight processing for authorization. This caused more than the obvious delay in starting or resuming service for customers—it actually cost the paper business.

“Previously, a transaction submitted with an invalid credit card wouldn't reject until the next night,” says John Saum, IT Manager for Architecture and Design at the Seattle Times. “Then we had the joy of calling the subscriber back and saying ‘I'm sorry we've had to stop your service because your credit card was rejected—do you have another credit card you'd like to use?’ And chances are we'd lose that customer.”

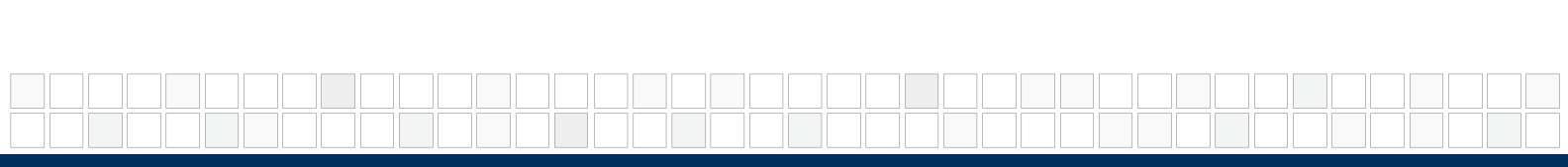
### PAYMENT PROCESSING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Seattle Times had developed its enterprise-wide ePay application on the Microsoft .NET platform running on Windows 2003 Server to provide real-time processing of credit card transaction processing. The .NET application is part of a BizTalk orchestration, with BizTalk controlling the workflow in a server configuration.

The catch? Their circulation application ran on a mainframe using CICS for transaction processing. The challenge was to find a way for this mainframe application to leverage their ePay system—preferably a solution that didn't require a lot of programming to implement and deploy. Traditionally, designing and deploying connections between mainframe and web applications has been a complex, disruptive, and time-consuming process.

### ENTER WEB SERVICES CONSUMPTION

Today the newspaper uses the DataDirect Shadow z/Services Web Services Consumption product to link the payment processing function of their mainframe-based circulation application to their .NET-based e-pay transaction processing system. It lets a Customer Service Rep immediately verify a credit card number or offer the customer alternate options if the transaction is declined.



DataDirect's Shadow z/Services not only enables the mainframe to publish web services, but its Web Services Consumption feature enables it to consume web services from external sources as well. In fact, it's the only product on the market today that fully answers the need for flexible bi-directional integration between mainframe and web services.

The Seattle Times selected the Shadow z/Services Web Services Consumption product for two key reasons: it provided all of the features, capabilities, and performance they needed, and it provided them without a lot of expensive programming and development overhead.

According to Saum, "WSC is used on both sides of the application to gather all the pertinent information around the credit card, store it, send it out of the mainframe, then on the way back—particularly if it's an accept of a credit card—appropriately notify the customer account that a payment has been received."

Besides curtailing the risk of lost business, Saum reports that the ability to run same-day settlement has saved the Seattle Times money in processing fees.

"The ability to do real-time credit card authorization has lowered the actual expense of accepting and processing credit cards," he says.

Saum also points out that the new functionality provided by the Shadow z/Services Web Services Consumption product comes with excellent performance, adding that the impact in terms of programming and integration costs was minimal.

"With this DataDirect product, the mainframe has unrestricted use of the ePay distributed application, essentially enabling the mainframe to act as a client to the overall SOA architecture, able to consume common web services available to all applications supported by the underlying architecture."

The Shadow z/Services Web Services Consumption product generated a COBOL stub; all that was required was to link that stub into the flow within the greater COBOL program. Because the XML schema had already been defined in the web service call by Shadow, it was merely a matter of plugging the right data into the necessary fields and initiating a send.

## LET THE PRESSES ROLL

By integrating their ePay payment processing application into all of their business processes, the Seattle Times has moved their infrastructure into the 21st century and now provides real-time payment processing to all their customers. It has enabled them to deliver better customer service, lowered transaction processing fees, reduced the number of problems caused by declined payments, and reduced their risk of dropped subscriptions—all improving their bottom line.

"The Shadow z/Services Web Services Consumption product has been an extremely useful tool, helping us achieve real-time credit card authorization that dramatically lowers the expense of accepting and processing credit cards, while enabling us to run same-day settlements that directly benefit the customer."

— John Saum  
IT Manager

The Shadow z/Services Web Services Consumption product has made the transition easier by providing a seamless two-way connection between the newspaper's .NET ePay system and their mainframe—and doing so efficiently and reliably, with no downtime and minimal development overhead.

“The Shadow z/Services Web Services Consumption product has been an extremely useful tool, helping us achieve real-time credit card authorization that dramatically lowers the expense of accepting and processing credit cards, while enabling us to run same-day settlements that directly benefit the customer,” concludes Saum.

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Progress Software Corporation (Nasdaq: PRGS) provides application infrastructure software for the development, deployment, integration and management of business applications. Our goal is to maximize the benefits of information technology while minimizing its complexity and total cost of ownership.

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