

CASE STUDY

The Weather Channel



The Situation

The Weather Channel (TWC) is the defacto standard source worldwide for weather information and weather-related content. The Weather Channel's massive multi-floor building is located in Atlanta, Georgia and houses equally massive quantities of equipment and systems to provide weather information to virtually all forms of communications.

Due to the varied array of media coupled with the demands of being at the forefront of instant information, The Weather Channel had invested time, money, and effort in finding a solution to manage the millions of dollars in equipment associated with a large technical television facility.

The Weather Channel had employed two solutions to manage their engineering needs. One solution was an internally developed access-based work request system. The other purchased system was an asset management system that was a java-based web application. The internally developed "home-grown" solution was not tied to assets or inventory, but provided a way to assign work to engineers. The purchased solution was used to manage assets with obvious limitations, as it was not designed for broadcasters, and had serious software limitations due to poor development as well as java run-time issues.

The Need

The Weather Channel desired one integrated solution that would manage work requests, inventory and asset management. They wanted a non-java, web-based solution that would run in Internet Explorer without all the headaches associated with traditional client/server solutions. Additionally, and due to the fact that TWC had amassed a considerable amount of data in the other two systems, it was imperative that the new solutions be able to import and reuse the legacy and historical data.

The Solution

The Weather Channel chose Obor Digital's Zeus for many reasons that included ...

- 1) Zeus was designed by Broadcasters for Broadcasters
- 2) Obor Digital could seamlessly import the data from BOTH legacy systems into Zeus, so that Zeus was populated with locations, work requests, engineers, and assets
- 3) The Zeus business process matrix could be tailored to EXACTLY fit the workflow that TWC required
- 4) The installation would be quick and non-distracting to the technical operations
- 5) Obor Digital was open to their suggestion for future developments
- 6) Zeus was able to fulfill the needs for different departments within the same software solution
- 7) Zeus was a software solution that would require minimal, if any, support from the IT department

The initial Zeus installation required less than a half day and the entire staff was trained and using Zeus over the next two days. Like The Golf Channel, the configuration and maintenance of the software is minimal and performed by one of the broadcast engineers. If any questions arise including assistance with upgrades and configurations, Obor Digital's support department simply performs a desktop share at a time that is convenient for TWC and the changes are quickly made.

Since the initial installation, and with the direct input of TWC, Obor Digital has developed the Groups Module, the Preventive Maintenance Module and the Service Agreements Module.

The Groups Module allows Zeus to manage the assets and workflows of different departments to use the same installation of Zeus. The Engineering Department can only see and manage assets that they are responsible for, whereas the Facilities Department can manage their assets without seeing the Engineering assets.

The Preventive Maintenance Module provides automatic work request generation and routing based on timelines or usage of an asset. This feature is great for cleaning decks, changing air filters and many other tasks that need to be performed on a routine basis.

The Service Agreements Module provides a way to manage the many service agreements associated with broadcast and non-broadcast equipment. It can track the usage of warranty parts and labor as well as provide a way to show vendors exactly what was received for the cost of the service agreement.

“For the first time in the history of broadcast, television professionals have a way to determine the benefit of the hundreds of thousands of dollars they spend every year on support agreements. I anticipate this powerful tool will not only expedite the Return on Investment associated with Zeus, but provide a powerful negotiation tool for future equipment purchases from vendors,” says Obor Digital’s President, Rob Caldwell.