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December 12, 2003 Newsday Says 'iCan' to Integration

By [Craig McGuire](#)

Behind the scenes of the daily hustle and bustle of production at *Newsday*, a new back-end integration system is keeping track of all the moving parts for the daily newspaper's business divisions.

The project, which integrated the newspaper's legacy mainframe with new reporting systems for its business processes, is part of a plan to help the newspaper pull more profits from its system. It could also raise the profile of Computer Associates ([Quote](#), [Chart](#)) iCan, the software maker's subsidiary that designed the new Service Management Suite (iSMS) product for *Newsday*.

The paper, which serves Long Island and parts of New York City, is rolling out the new billing and reporting system for its widespread network of some 60 delivery agents, the entities that organize the local home deliveries to subscribers and other distribution points throughout Queens, Nassau and Suffolk counties.

The project brought unique challenges for iCan, as well as for *Newsday*. All of the paper's major revenue streams are tied to readership circulation, including

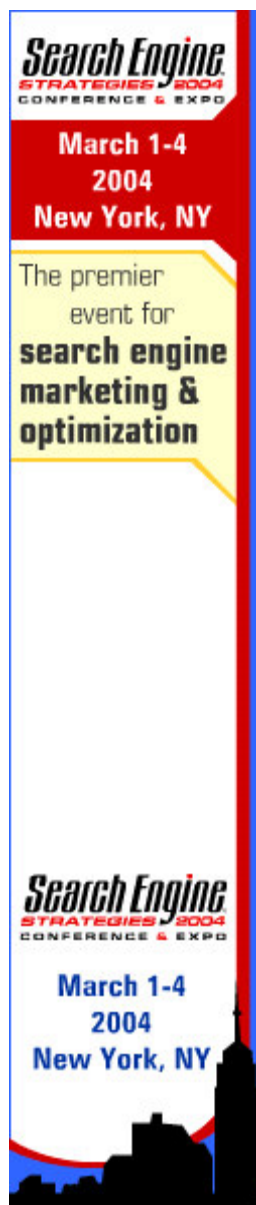
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fees from subscription and news stand fees, and, of course, advertising rates based on those circulation numbers.

That meant updating a mission-critical system that delivers the paper's lifeblood through billing, circulation, and responses to customer requests. Before the upgrade, many of those processes were supported by a homegrown system. As is the case with older networks, data silos often have trouble connecting to other data sources across a network.

"This system now provides our customer service professionals with access to a common database, enabling them to respond quickly to customer requests and complaints much more effectively," said Frank E. Toner, vice president for Information Systems and Engineering Services at *Newsday*.

Up until now, *Newsday* relied on a legacy application known as VB News developed many years ago for the newspaper by an outside consultant using Microsoft's Visual Basic programming language.

"Among its many shortcomings was the fact that transmitting data to the mainframe was time consuming and not always reliable," said Robert Rosenthal, who managed the steering committee at *Newsday* responsible for the project. "As a result, the agents did not enter the information frequently or consistently."

Now, the iSMS Web-based interface provides agents with easier input functions, with many processes now automated, and gives customer service professionals much better access and reporting functionality. The middleware links the new front-end systems to *Newsday's* legacy, mainframe-based circulation systems in the daily job of managing all home delivery billing, generating route list creation, and delivery sequencing.

Because of the logistical challenges involved, such as overlapping billing cycles and the general complexities of tracking the paper's delivery network, *Newsday* staggered the roll-out by bringing a few agents onto the system each month throughout the year.

Currently, the *Newsday* agents on iSMS account for deliveries to some 80,000 subscribers. When the rollout is complete, it will account for data on more than 250,000 subscribers.

According to independent auditor Audit Bureau of Circulations, *Newsday's* most recent numbers on total circulation, including news stand sales and other points of distribution, include a daily average of 580,069, with Sunday average circulation standing at 678,019.

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Newsday launched its search for a replacement to VB News last year, evaluating numerous vendors, and even stumbling with a failed attempt with another product before tapping iCan.

The rollout could prove to be a case study for other media operations with far-flung parts to manage.

"Our version would be potentially of interest to any newspaper or magazine that is heavily dependent on a distribution model," said Rosenthal. "This is a non-traditional use of iCan, but it shows how the product can be leveraged in a very specific way."

The Islandia, N.Y.-based iCan, a business unit launched by CA in 2000, decided to wait until its new customers such as Newsday had fully tested and deployed the management suite before launching the new product this week, iCan's CEO Nancy Li said.

✔ "In the current business environment, with the drive towards profitability, there is a lot of scrutiny on IT spending," Li said. "This provides companies with a way to implement centralized IT services to multiple lines of business."

The product also works with other enterprise management software, such as IBM's Tivoli, HP's OpenView, and CA's own Unicenter product lines.

✔ Other new users of the iSMS product are financial services giants Lehman Brothers and State Street Bank.

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