

FUND ACCOUNTING

Chase GIS Leaves Fingerprint on Apollo During Beta

Committing dollars to Web-based technology can be a costly decision for an IT manager. That's why Chase Global Investor Services' (GIS) senior technical officer, George MacDonald, insisted on participating in the development process for SunGard Investment Systems' fledgling Apollo Web-based architecture for fund accounting. Following five months of beta testing, SunGard has its first rollout, and Chase GIS has a tool it can use. As one of the world's largest global custodians, Chase GIS provides custody services to mutual funds, investment managers, pension funds, insurance companies and banks worldwide.

SunGard approached Chase GIS last year with the concept of Apollo and the opportunity to become a beta-test partner. Apollo is designed to allow internal users at Chase GIS to access

and analyze investment accounting data in SunGard's InvestOne fund accounting system through browser-based technology. Apollo beta-testing began in May 1998 and was completed in late September.

"The purpose of the beta-test was to ensure that the capability being developed worked properly and to assist SunGard in developing a product that would meet GIS's business needs," says MacDonald. "The result is a product that can assist our fund accounting group with day-to-day activities."

Chase GIS uses InvestOne — dubbed World Invest System (WINS) by internal IT staff — to provide multi-currency, trade-date based, fully accrued accounting and reporting. WINS is the accounting platform available to all GIS accounting locations worldwide to account for and report upon client port-

folios daily. It is also equipped to handle regulatory reporting and tax compliance in all jurisdictions where the funds serviced are domiciled. WINS has been online at Chase since 1993.

MacDonald says his company hopes to gain additional efficiency in fund accounting with Apollo. "We hope to accomplish this by utilizing the suite of reporting and drill down capabilities available in Apollo to reconcile accounting data," says MacDonald. "Apollo's on-line viewing of accounting reports and data will provide a more efficient process than running hard copy reports in InvestOne."

MacDonald says that while Chase GIS has signed on to implement Apollo by April of next year, there is still room for improvement. "Eventually, we hope Apollo will be enhanced to include transaction entry, reconciliation of files from other systems with InvestOne, and financial statement reporting," he says.

MacDonald says Apollo's best attributes are "its ease of use, speed of response time and potential capabilities, including trade entry and reconciliation."

— Craig McGuire

ORDER MANAGEMENT

Merrin Trims Down, Adds Sybase and Lands First European Client

Software developer restructures, keeping the client in mind, to gain back lost market share.

Shortly following the April 1996 acquisition of Merrin Financial, ADP officials could only shake their heads as they watched the trade order management software developer drop market share and value. Once the biggest kid on the block by far, a number of competitors have emerged over the past few years — including The MacGregor Group, LongView Group and décalog — to siphon off business. Hawking a DOS-based system with a Btrieve database, it seemed things could get worse before they got better.

Two years later, Merrin has retooled

by streamlining and strengthening its product line, and by restructuring its staff. Developers of the Merrin Financial Trading Platform have added Windows functionality, Y2k capabilities and will soon offer euro compliance. Meanwhile, the developer has landed its first European client for its trading platform, and a Sybase version of the product is being rolled out at T. Rowe Price and Massachusetts Financial.

"Some of our biggest clients that were thought to go away from us at a point in time, have really struggled with our competition," says Merrin's president and chief executive officer, J. Thomas Conley. "We are now focusing on the things that are important to our clients. The key is, instead of working on 10 different prod-

ucts, we have reduced that to six."

The product line isn't the only thing that has been scaled back at Merrin. "We made the decision back in April to absolutely do away with the sales staff," says Conley. "I mean, we had sales guys out knocking on doors and getting people interested, and then we had to bring out the technicians to actually sell the system." He says Merrin reduced its entire staff by one third at that time.

Conley says Merrin will launch a major marketing campaign early next year, placing at least some emphasis on the European market. "They have a lot of paper manual processes, so there's a big need for automation," says Conley. "At this point we have one client [in Europe], but we have another half