

## Hub solution helps Transco launch Information 2000

Commentary by Richard Cribb, Program Manager, Transco

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### INDUSTRY

### UTILITIES

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### BUSINESS APPLICATION

### ENTERPRISE APPLICATION INTEGRATION, DATA WAREHOUSING

## <sup>DataMirror®</sup> Constellar® Hub

Transco ([www.transco.uk.com](http://www.transco.uk.com)) is responsible for the delivery of gas to 20 million homes and businesses across the United Kingdom. To maximize the safety and efficiency of the network, engineers, managers and executives must have access to information about all 100 million assets – from valves and pipes to meters and gasometers.

Transco is committed to safety. The company operates around-the-clock with 365-days-a-year emergency service for gas escapes. Because prevention is preferable to cure, the company also devotes considerable

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resources to inspecting and maintaining its assets. In total, Transco spends an average of £1 billion per year to ensure its network is safe and reliable.

### The Problem

Before an engineer can attend to a leak, he must be armed with vital information about the location of

the asset and its history. Similarly, managers must have access to work schedules to ensure that the most appropriate engineer is assigned to the job. Transco’s financial staff also has an interest in the company’s asset base. They need to keep tabs on the “health” of every asset so that the working life of each one is maximized.

The sheer scale of Transco’s network presented a series of logistical problems to strategists. With a network incorporating 255,000 km of pipes, over 100 million assets and over 20 million consumers, Transco needed to come up with a radical plan to achieve its objectives. In response, Transco developed Information 2000, a new IT strategy designed to take the company beyond simply updating applications. This strategy required an overhaul of the organization’s mission-critical information systems that had evolved over many years and across many locations.

Transco inherited numerous applications from British Gas, some of which had been developed when British Gas operated as twelve semi-autonomous regions. In addition, two new applications – Severn Trent Operational Reporting Management System (STORMS) and Transco Engineering Asset Repository (TEAR) – were designed and implemented to provide a coherent basis for the

new infrastructure. Together with a Geographical Information System (GIS) – a central repository for information about the location of assets – Transco’s applications were ideally suited to the new business model. But if Transco’s managers were to maximize the safety of the network while efficiently allocating resources to asset repair and replacement, they needed the most accurate and complete information from the pertinent applications.

“For Information 2000 to be successful, Transco required a strategic approach to the management of data throughout the data extraction, transformation and load processes from numerous operational systems,” says Richard Cribb, Program Manager of Transco.

## The Solution

Transco recognized that each system’s data could not be considered in isolation: applications are inter-dependent. The work management system, for example, contained information about work outstanding or in progress. This needed to be passed to the asset repository system, as any change to the transport network – for example, the addition of new pipes – would affect the value of Transco’s asset base.

In order to present the data in a consistent format, Transco decided to build a data warehouse based on DataMirror Constellar Hub in conjunction with an Oracle database. The Hub resides between the work management and asset repository

systems, extracts data from both and transforms it into a consistent format before transporting it to the data warehouse.

DataMirror Constellar Hub is a leading Oracle-based enterprise application integration solution that enables the movement, transformation and integration of data between heterogeneous environments from a central point of control. The Hub includes SAP connectivity via its certified SAP/ALE connector interface, as well as pre-built interfaces to PeopleSoft and Oracle Applications.

## The Benefits

Since its implementation, DataMirror Constellar Hub has benefited Transco in several ways.

“Constellar Hub provides a robust, scalable solution in terms of consistency of data definitions through its metadata catalogue facility,” says Cribb. “It is very powerful and allows us to extract, transform and load large volumes of data in an ever-decreasing window. Features within the application provide the necessary business controls with rigorous error handling capabilities.

“The source operational systems are maintained on a variety of platforms and architectures,” adds Cribb. “The Hub’s flexibility ensures this is not a barrier to the success of Information 2000.

## Conclusions

The Information 2000 project is part of a wider information strategy within Transco and experience to date suggests that the company is on the right track. The methodology deployed in developing this data warehouse will be used to develop Transco’s corporate information strategy.

Using DataMirror Constellar Hub, Transco has the ability to reuse the knowledge gained during this project to better manage information in other parts of the organization. Transco plans to extend the approach to other disciplines including manpower reporting, investment management and transportation volumes, thereby moving closer to its goals of maximized safety and greater efficiency.



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