Snapshots
in Productivity

BCD Business Computer Design

10 Questions for

Larry Wood
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on
ProGen WebSmart: iSeries-Web application development/deployment tool.

DeSoto County is situated at Mississippi's Northwestern corner and encompasses 478 square miles. Agriculture and manufacturing are thriving industries here. Its population in 2000 was 107,199 and has grown by 57% since then. DeSoto ranks as Mississippi's fastest growing county and is the 39th fastest growing county in the United States. County government is situated in Hernando, and houses the offices of Tax Assessor; Sheriff, Accounting, GIS, IT, and many others. DeSoto County's IT department uses an IBM AS/400 model 170 with a large percentage of internally developed and extensively modified third party software applications.

DeSoto County

BCD:	***What types of applications did you develop with WebSmart?***
Wood:	"We wrote inquiry applications to make our public data accessible. Everything on our website is done with WebSmart. The site offers tax appraisal information, land records, voter registration, board of supervisors meeting minutes and agendas are all online. Much of it accesses AS/400 database files. Our tax assessor who wanted a site that facilitated inquiries prompted developing this solution. The assessors office got phone calls all day- non stop from people closing on houses and that kind of thing."
BCD:	***Did you evaluate any competitive products?***
Wood:	"I thought about doing this in Lotus Domino. I didn't want to do it in WebSphere because of the cost more than anything- and I didn't want to do the IBM thing. When I decided to evaluate WebSmart, I went to BCD's website, downloaded it and it started to work immediately. These guys have their act together. And compared to the alternatives ProGen WebSmart is a very reasonably priced product."
BCD:	***Where do you see the most value in the applications you've developed with WebSmart?***
Wood:	"For the most part, the web is a big marketing tool. For government, it's a great way to increase accessibility and visibility

of elected officials—it's their connection to the public.   Up until now people have only been able to communicate with elected officials over the telephone.

It's also important from a business standpoint. DeSoto County is in the middle of a growth explosion- people are buying lots of houses. Because of this, title workers love it. For example, we have 7 or 8 years worth of deeds that are accessible on line.   We're saving the people doing the title work money because they don't have to come down here, and we're saving the county money."

BCD: *Was WebSmart easy to use?*

Wood: "It's very easy to use and they make it better all the time. Initially I used their templates to make my own custom templates. I took out all the add and delete functions and basically made it just inquiry—that's all I needed. This template gives everything on our website the same look and feel.

The first thing we developed was a tax appraisal system for the tax assessors office. We had the complete system on the web in a month. It went very quick."

BCD: *Why did you select the AS/400 to host your Website?*

Wood: "Anybody who wants to do a website needs to do it on an AS/400. Our site has been out there for two years and it's never had a hiccup. Whereas, all of our PDF images are stored on a Microsoft server and its gone down three times because it's susceptible to viruses and all kinds of stuff."

BCD: *Do you plan to use WebSmart for future development?*

Wood: "I'm working on a new application that will let people find out how much their car tag is going to be. Now the tax assessors office gets bombarded with requests from car dealers."

BCD: *How much traffic do your sites see?*

Wood: "People use it a lot. Title workers have access to the tax appraisal data and land records online. Now they can do a lot of their title work and never come down here. We are the 39th fastest growing county in the nation so this is important."

BCD: *Have you received feedback from People using the sites?*

Wood: "We get really good comments on it. The tax assessor called me the other day and passed along compliments that he got. My whole goal is to make it easy to use. It has to make sense and it can't leave you scratching your head."

BCD: *Did BCD's Technical Support team give you satisfactory answers when you called them?*

Wood: "This is what sealed the deal for me. I have never called when someone didn't have an answer for me or didn't get back to me by the next day."

BCD: ***What would you like to tell others about your experience with WebSmart and what grade would you give BCD and WebSmart?***

Wood: "It's a good product, I would tell anybody to buy it. As far as a grade, I'd give them an A. WebSmart is good stuff."