CASE STUDY - CONSTRUCTION MANAGER CALENDAR & TASK MANAGER

[Ideate, LLC](#) - Developer

Situation

A Construction Manager needed to coordinate tasks and meetings for an international design team for a major museum addition. They wanted a system which could be expanded and enhanced, and applied to additional construction projects. The system had to be available around the clock as well as around the world.

Problem Definition

The client reviewed several solutions, including many of the Project Extranet services and the capabilities of Outlook's Web Access component. Once they accounted for all the seat licenses which would be required, most Project Extranets were too expensive. The Client also wanted to retain the data on-premesis, which ruled out most of the subscription services. The Client also preferred to offer their own customers a more personalized, unique and project-branded solution for marketing reasons.

The Client wished to append document management into the solution and, after attempting to manage the information within Outlook, found the granularity of information managed by Outlook (and therefor Outlook Web Access) insufficient.

The Solution

The solution is a custom web application built with Microsoft Visual FoxPro, Windows 2000 Server, Internet Information Services 5, West Wind Web Connect, and Amyuni PDF Creator (to generate dynamic PDF reports) - using Internet Explorer and Acrobat Reader for the client application. The Project Extranet is accessible from any location with Internet access.

After the user logs in, the first screen is the monthly calendar (right). The user can elect to see only the tasks and appointments they are personally involved with, or all project tasks and appointments.
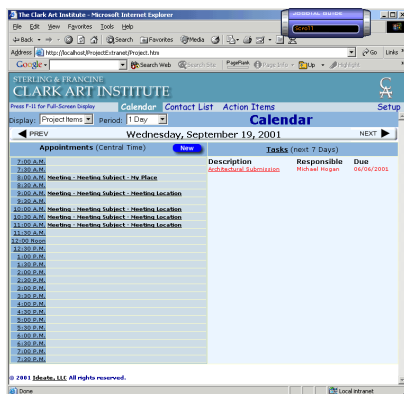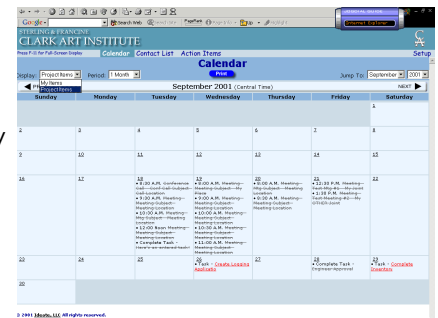

The user can switch to a three-month view, or a one-day view (left). Users can click on any appointment or task to see details or to mark a task complete. Appointments in the past are grayed and struck-out. Completed tasks are grayed and currently due or overdue tasks appear in red.

This project had users in many time zones. All appointments are adjusted to each users home time zone so that scheduled teleconferences occur concurrently.

Clicking on any appointment brings up the appointment detail sheet. Users with add/edit permissions can edit and add appointments. Invited attenders receive e-mail notification. Future modifications will include Outlook-compatible vCalendar notices sent to attenders, allowing them to add the appointment to their personal calendar by simply double-clicking.
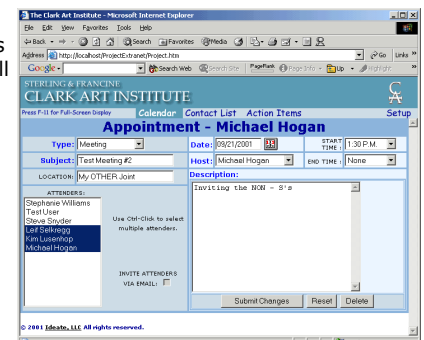

In addition to appearing on the calendar, Tasks and Action Items appear on their own screen, with built-in filtering and tree-type drop down
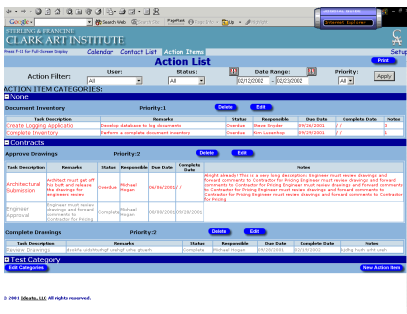
lists for each category. Users can click on any task for complete details. Of course, and added task will appear on the Project calendar as well as on the personal calendar of those responsible. Printed PDF reports are available at most screens.

Individual tasks are viewed, edited, added and deleted at the detail screen.
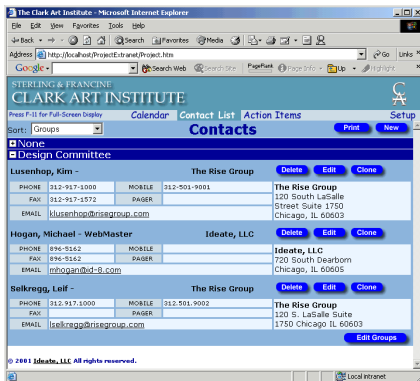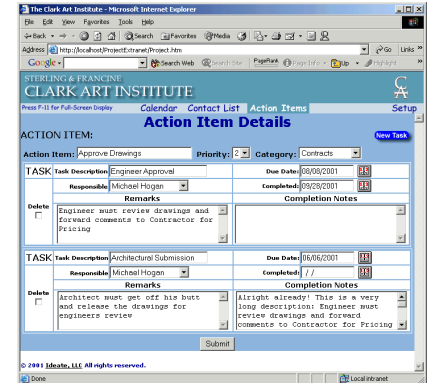
System users are added or disabled through the Contact List. Their access levels are defined by the Project Administrator, although personal contact and password information can be defined by the individual user. Any user can also belong to one or more GROUPS. The Contact List can be viewed or printed by Company, by Name, or by Group.

Benefits

Updates and modifications are made transparently to the users - with no client software except their browser and Acrobat Reader. Support has proved to be minimal.

Development was rapid. Development progress was accessible at all times on the web for the user team for the first planned Project - allowing for dynamic feedback, quick response and the ability to rapidly narrow on the ideal solution. Suggestions continue to be quickly rolled into the product with no downtime. This kind of immediate gratification leads to interest and commitment on the part of the end users.