



Company Details

RWE, with headquarters in Swindon, is a leading integrated UK energy company. It operates and manages a portfolio of flexible, low cost coal, oil and gas fired power stations using its asset management skills to extract maximum value. At the other end of the supply chain it has a leading energy retail business – npower, with more than 6 million customer accounts.

Location

- United Kingdom

Industry

- Energy

Business Challenges

- Respond to competitive pressures with faster response times
- Rapid growth in the number of systems used
- Necessity to implement new business applications quickly
- Compliance with the New Energy Trading Arrangements (NETA)

Solution Overview

- SeeBeyond selected as integration platform after selection process
- SeeBeyond installed for internal and external data exchange
- SeeBeyond selected as a proven product with ease of use

"eGate Integrator has met all our expectations and has even exceeded them in many respects. Its impact on our business has been overwhelmingly positive, and we were particularly impressed by its ability to deal smoothly with a tenfold increase in data volumes. Furthermore, new developers need very little training in its use,"

Neil Palfreyman, platform development services team leader, Innogy

Business Challenges

Over the past few years, the UK energy industry has seen major changes. The market for energy services was first opened up to competition in April 1998. For the first time, consumers found themselves with a choice of provider. A trading market also came into existence, with suppliers able to compensate for temporary shortages by purchasing energy from other suppliers. At Innogy (then National Power), these changes were accompanied by rapid growth in the number of applications used.

"We found ourselves having to implement new business applications quickly, and this had major implications for our approach to data interfacing," said Neil Palfreyman, platform development services team leader at Innogy. *"Traditionally, we had always developed custom interfaces between our applications, but this task was becoming a great deal more complex and time-consuming. Clearly, an alternative was required."*

Solution Overview

Palfreyman began to look at the market and after an evaluation of three competitive products decided on SeeBeyond's eGate Integrator eBusiness Integration Suite to act as Innogy's integration platform.

"eGate Integrator's key advantage was its ease of use. We knew that our developers would be under pressure to create new interfaces quickly, so we did not want them to have to struggle to learn the system. SeeBeyond's professionalism was another important factor: the company had good people who clearly understood the eGate Integrator product and built a close relationship with us right from the outset," commented Palfreyman.

eGate Integrator was installed at National Power in 1998, running on clustered Sun Enterprise servers. SeeBeyond's consultants played a major role in the implementation project, helping to develop and test the system's components and then transferring knowledge to the internal team.

From the outset, eGate Integrator was used for data exchange both internally and externally. External links were becoming increasingly important in order to trade energy and transfer customer accounts between suppliers.

Business Benefits

According to Palfreyman, the major benefit of eGate Integrator was and is the ability to launch new applications quickly within a dynamic marketplace.

"If applications are not weighed down by interfacing code, they are much leaner and can therefore be developed and changed more quickly and easily. With eGate Integrator, it is also possible to change the format of data on the fly as it moves between applications, which saves having to rewrite the applications," he said.

A reduction in the resources needed to develop and maintain applications translates directly into cost savings. At the time eGate Integrator was first implemented, an independent study by IDC estimated a payback period of 0.67 years and a return on investment (ROI) of 293 per cent. According to Palfreyman, subsequent events showed these predictions to have been reasonably accurate, although ROI was not the driver for the project. Early studies showed that Innogy achieved a 35% reduction in the time it would have taken to make interface developments using SeeBeyond instead of the traditional approach.

Running on a high-availability platform, eGate Integrator also ensures more effective data exchange, with Innogy's trading division experiencing application uptime well in excess of 99 per cent. The ability to archive data is another important benefit. SeeBeyond created a system that interfaces with IBM's ADSM software to ensure that all the data entering and leaving Innogy is archived on tape. The archive then provides a source of historical data that can be used to populate new application databases as they are created. According to Palfreyman, the process of importing historical data into a new application would have taken months in the past, but can now be completed within days.

In addition to this gradual expansion, Innogy's data exchange requirements have changed with the introduction of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements (NETA). NETA marks a shift from pooled to commodity-style trading in near-real-time. For Innogy, eGate Integrator was chosen as the integration platform for this critical development – a reflection, claims Palfreyman, of his company's confidence in the product.

Plans for the Future

In total, eGate Integrator supports 135 interfaces at Innogy. There are external links with Logica, the National Grid Company and Syntegra/Electralink. In addition, Innogy's rapidly growing presence in the domestic supply market has resulted in a need for new billing and account management systems and Innogy will once again use eGate Integrator as the integration platform.

"NETA has produced a step change in the complexity of the systems and data that we have to deal with. In particular, we need to exchange a lot of time-critical data. However, this does not present any problems for eGate Integrator, which has not caused a single instance of data loss or corruption since we implemented it," **Palfreyman** said.

Business Benefits

- Ability to launch new applications quickly
- Reduction in resources needed to develop and maintain applications achieves ROI of 293%
- Reduction of 35% in development time for interface developments
- Application uptime in excess of 99%

Technology Profile

- SeeBeyond Components
- eGate™ Integrator

Integrations

- Logica
- National Grid Company
- Syntegra/Electralink
- IBM ADSM
- Billing and account management systems
- Support of 135 interfaces

Sizing

- Support of 135 interfaces

Hardware/OS

- Sun Enterprise Ultra
- Sun Enterprise 420