



RouteOne - Data Delivery made Easy



Fellowes are a global, family owned organisation whose corporate headquarters are located in Chicago USA. They provide a wide range of office products from business machines to mobile accessories, from media labelling and storage to desktop office essentials.

Fellowes Limited in the UK is the head office for the European operation with the IT Department supplying support for, amongst others, France, Holland and Germany.

Their ERP systems are centred upon GEAC's System 21 Financial and Distribution applications but also include a number of bespoke applications running on an iSeries based in the UK. The information is held in a complex and sophisticated database and to cope with the varied user requirements there is a need for a number of different types of extract.

RouteOne was purchased to assist in this process and its advanced functionality has enabled Fellowes to implement it in a variety of different ways.

Replacing Client Access File Transfers

The IT department creates a large number of extracts, both from the System 21 database and their own bespoke libraries, and transfers the information into Excel for their users. These extracts can be fairly complex as the data is held separately for each country and is split into different divisions.

Before the introduction of RouteOne, Fellowes used IBM Query to create these extracts and Client Access for the transfer. To enable the users to run these extracts required them navigating two menu options and the IT department had the time consuming task of creating the authorisation process. Whenever a new user wished to utilise this process, the new user's authorisation needed to be established and training had to take place. This proved a costly and cumbersome process and has led to Fellowes replacing the majority of these original extracts with RouteOne transfers whilst using RouteOne to create any new extracts that may be required.

The overall benefit gained is that whole operation is much simpler from both the IT point of view as well as for the users. RouteOne definitions replace the query extracts, making use of some of the sophisticated functionality that is simply not available in Query. This included date conversions & calculations, run-time parameters, conditional fields ('if' 'then' else statements) and indexed arrays (columns instead of rows). This functionality has enabled Fellowes to create the extracts they require much more easily given the complex nature of the data. An added benefit is that iSeries performance has also improved as users now run a minimum number of queries.

RouteOne transfers also have the added advantage of an automatic email option that has enabled Fellowes to deliver the data to the end user via email. Excel macros have been incorporated into many of the extracts to provide better presentation of the data. RouteOne automatically runs these macros after the data transfer and prior to the emailing of the information.

A menu option has been created for users, which replaces the two menu options needed previously. This has eliminated some of the issues users encountered when both menu options had not been taken or had been selected in the wrong sequence and authority issues are no longer a problem. From the users point of view, the biggest benefit is the speed in which the data arrives in an email. They simply detach the data and save it in their own folders. In addition the use of run time parameters allows the users to select only the data that is relevant, whether this be data from a single customer or supplier account to a range of dates.

“Developing sophisticated management reports”

Fellowes have developed a number of sophisticated reporting applications providing information ranging from KPIs for supplier performance to Daily Sales Analysis. Previously this could only have been achieved using a number of applications, ranging from program development to client access transfer. RouteOne has enabled the IT department to easily develop a management reporting system. This has been achieved within one product, requires no programming skills, has led to a considerable increase in productivity and is very easy to maintain.

A number of extracts have been developed to provide each operating company and division with a series of Excel Spreadsheets. These have been incorporated within a CL program using the RouteOne command to run the requests. Overriding the runtime parameters on the command with specific company and division information allows the same requests to be utilised repeatedly. Alternative email distribution lists may also be specified. Again macros have been used to enhance the presentation of the data.

“Sending information via FTP to a remote site”

Fellowes now send business critical information to their parent company in the States on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

A number of programs extract the data into various files and these are sent to the US using RouteOne requests incorporated within CL routines. There was no need to develop in house FTP scripts as RouteOne provided a solution that was easily incorporated into their own routines. RouteOne’s methodology of

using FTP socket programs ensures that the data is rapidly transmitted whilst the event logs provide a complete history of each transmission.

Summary of Benefits

Increased productivity as RouteOne has automated time consuming, labour intensive tasks.

Business critical information is readily available in a well-presented user defined format.

Users receive information quickly and reliably.

Reductions in the iSeries processing overhead as there is a significant decrease in user dependency on Query extracts.

**Utilities 400 Limited
44-46 Lower Bridgeman Street
Bolton BL2 1DG**

Tele: 01204 388883

www.uti400.com