

With Coglin Mill's RODIN, 3 programmers built 70 data sets and 60+ RPG applications in just five months for Focus on the Family's CRM Data Warehouse

A multinational, multimedia ministry, Focus on the Family (www.family.org) was founded in 1977 in response to Dr. James Dobson's increasing concern for the American family. A Ph.D. in child development (University of Southern California), he had served 14 years as associate clinical professor of pediatrics at the USC School of Medicine and a concurrent 17 years on the attending staff of Los Angeles Children's Hospital in the divisions of Child Development and Medical Genetics. What he had seen included massive internal and external pressures on American households, causing unprecedented disintegration. Yet there seemed to be no comprehensive, rational and biblical conception of the family for those in greatest need. From a two-room suite in Arcadia, California, Dr. Dobson began with radio: a 25-minute weekly program heard on only a few dozen stations.

Since then, Focus on the Family has become an international organization with more than 82 different ministries requiring nearly 1,300 employees. With broadcasts heard on over 6,000 facilities worldwide, Dr. Dobson still explores family issues, usually with one or more recognized experts as guests. Meanwhile, other parts of the organization produce eleven additional broadcasts, eleven magazine and newsletter publications sent to more than 2.3 million people a month, award-winning books, films and videos. Focus also responds to as many as 55,000 letters a week, offers professional counseling and referrals to a network of 1,500 therapists, and addresses public policy and cultural issues.

Focus on the Family relies on an IBM® eServer iSeries™ with J.D. Edwards® World and One World packages to run their ministry and another dedicated IBM® eServer iSeries for data warehousing. In 2002, Focus on the Family embarked on an in-house CRM initiative, "Constituent Connections – Relationships for Eternity," with two objectives: 1) Better understand constituent needs and interests, based on transactional data, survey results and purchased overlay information, and 2) target and align ministry resources with constituent needs.

Problem to solve: Transform and load 12+ million donor records into the new CRM data warehouse

Solution: RODIN (row-dan) Data Asset Management developed by Coglin Mill

Benefits:

1. Cleaner data: "We ensure that clean data populates the data warehouse repository."
2. Productivity: "In just five months, three programmers and I (part-time) built 70 data sets and 60+ RPG applications."
3. Data documentation: "Provides the active meta-data we need to document the ETL process and business rules"
4. Reduces maintenance cost/effort: "I can research and resolve business rule problems quickly"
5. Support: "I give Coglin Mill an A+"

Contact: Bill Smith, Data Warehouse Manager, Focus on the Family

Comments:

"Focus on the Family already had a transaction warehouse built with ShowCase Warehouse Builder. We wanted to go further and explore relationships, to get at things you can't just yank out, things that are derived from the transaction history. To build this constituent warehouse, we decided on a best-of-breed strategy. ShowCase is very good at pulling information and for presentation. For transformation and loading—the guts of the process—we now use RODIN."

"We chose RODIN because it is designed from the ground up to work natively with the iSeries and provides the active meta-data we need to document the ETL process and the business rules being applied to our data. RODIN gives us the performance and tools we need to complete our CRM project and maintain our other data marts. With RODIN we understand the data and know that it is 'clean' and accurate."

"With RODIN, in just five months, three programmers and I (part-time) built 70 data sets and 60+ RPG applications. We had purchased RODIN because our queries couldn't handle some advanced transformations or error management. We knew what information (fields) we wanted to pull and from where to pull the data. RODIN makes it easy to do that."

"The CRM data warehouse holds 12.5 million constituent records and 22 million transactions, and covers 1996 to the present. Weekly, we extract transactions from our J.D. Edwards systems on the production IBM eServer iSeries (a 4-way Model 830) into the warehouse iSeries (a 2-way iSeries Model 730). RODIN is used for data cleansing and for loading the data into the RODIN repository where the data is summarized for loading into ShowCase data marts.

"Currently two departments access the data marts for analysis: marketing (5 cubes) and inventory control. Power users in marketing use ShowCase Query to drill down to the detail level in the RODIN repository. For most users, the information is similar to what they got before in reports. 80% is the same transaction information. But 20% is new, derived from constituent behavior. For example, for marketing we built a dashboard to track the 'Young Family' campaign. That would not have been possible before."

"Marketing wants to do more analysis and wants to add outside help. Yet we still need to feed them the information. They don't want to see millions of transactions. RODIN summarizes the data and always balances to the underlying detail, which makes for more thorough analysis by the third parties."

"A benefit that is hidden under the covers is cleaner data. We trap more data problems, and we can recycle them with RODIN reject management. We can process open, incomplete transactions, flag them and then re-pull them again the next week and update the data warehouse with the finalized transaction. We also built an omission model with an audit trail. These things aren't visible to the end user, but improve data quality and reliability overall. We built all these with RODIN business rules."

"Another key RODIN benefit is that it reduces the cost and effort of maintenance. I can research and resolve business rule problems quickly. I've also been in the built-from-scratch world, and this is far easier to maintain."

"Now senior management wants more cubes and marts. We have a long list of projects for finance, more for marketing, for forecasting (finance and inventory) and for individual ministries. Currently we are preparing monthly reports for our CFO on new constituents and where they are coming from, so he may become the first one for whom we'll build an executive dashboard utilizing Hyperion's Essbase® MOLAP technology."

"I give Coglin Mill an A+ for support, both for quality and responsiveness. I was so surprised to call the support line one day and Alan Jordan (VP of Development at Coglin Mill) answered the phone. He answered my technical question and he had a patch for us in 24 hours. I was thrilled that we picked the right company for support, because a project can die without it."