

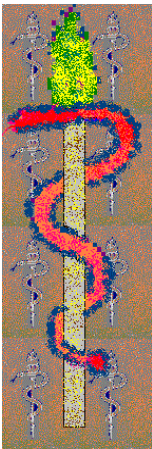


Case Study: ARL98-RP-A03Y2K

Meta4, Incorporated's Approach Used TEC's Technology Evaluation Support System to Prioritize Software Application Systems to Mitigate Year 2000 Problems in New York Area Hospitals



Preamble: Meta4, Inc. is a consulting company in the New York area specializing in Y2K issues. Prioritization of computer systems for Y2K compliance is a critical part of their mission process, for which TEC's Evaluation Support System, formerly called ERGO, was an ideal tool. In this case study, prioritizing over 120 systems applications shared among many hospital departments and facilities shows the capability of the TESS to resolve such large problems through a clear and defensible process.



In 1997, with just three years before the millennium bug would strike, a large New York City hospital network realized it had a major issue on its hands. Meta4 Incorporated's assessment indicated that the vast majority of more than 120 application systems running in over a dozen hospital facilities required Y2K mitigation in order to insure that at least critical programs were working on January 1, 2000, and February 29, 2000. The task prioritization problem was immense, as it was clear that not all programs could be modified, installed, and tested in the given time frame.

Revere Perkins, senior computer scientist at Meta4, Inc, realized he had to find a tool that could cope with the immense problem. He estimated that a simple spreadsheet model would not be adequate and that it would be impossible to present the necessary information to various hospital authorities in a straightforward fashion using such a model. Moreover, many hospital authorities had little experience with or knowledge of such prioritization problems, and needed an easy introduction to the process. As a consequence he searched for a tool that would facilitate his task, and discovered TEC's evaluation support tool. With

TESS he could build any size model, and the navigation, analytical and reporting tools, would greatly facilitate Meta4's analysis and presentation problems.

Since each application system serviced at least one - and possibly many - hospital facilities, the impact of each system on each facility had to be gauged. One problem was the relative importance (or weight) that should be assigned to each facility. In order to determine these weights, an initial model was built with just a few criteria, with the facilities as Options. The output of the first model was a prioritized list of all of the member hospitals in the system, allowing the three other large models to be built with the weights of the facilities generated from the output of the first model. Each of the networked application systems in use at each of the facilities could now be prioritized. This prioritization of the networked application systems used TESS's point-and-click technology in the model tree.

The first model of this multi-part process consisted of just a few criteria. The three other models were much larger, each with hundreds of criteria covering all the networked software applications in use at the hospitals in the system. Each of the three models dealt with a different dimension of the impact of each application system on the total hospital network's operations. The three intermediate models were then consolidated in a final model to produce an overall prioritized list of application systems.

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Through TESS's navigation and point-and-click methods, plus model building capabilities, the task was made much easier, and enabled Meta4 to complete a difficult task which it otherwise may have found almost impossible to do. As the process was clear it also could minimize legal risks from challenges to the process later.

Revere Perkins comments that TESS greatly helped Meta4 in meeting its mandate, and within the scheduled time. "Without TESS, it would have been nearly impossible to adequately address this large challenge. TESS helped us focus on the issues at hand, as well as providing a formal documented process needed for future audit and possible challenges. TESS has saved us significant effort and time. In our estimation, TESS was the best and only tool that could manage the problem. Since completing that project we have continued to use TESS to assist other hospital networks in the Eastern United States with similar situations, including the prioritization of Biomedical Devices and Embedded Systems for Y2K impact. At the same time, it means we are building on our expertise for future business development needs as well as expanding into other applications."

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