



Ladybridge Systems

Case Study—Applied Concepts



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Applied Concepts Inc, based in Plano, Texas, trading as Stalker Radar, is the leading manufacturer of radar units for police and sports use. Their application runs all aspects of the company from accounting to sales and is used by almost all staff—about 100 users at their site plus a further 12 off-site.

They first saw a reference to QM that showed the availability of a free personal version for non-commercial use. Attracted by this, they downloaded the Windows version to give it a try and were impressed by what they saw.

Previously using D3, they wanted to migrate to a new platform to lower the cost of licenses and to provide a more powerful programming environment. Testing with QM showed that both of these objectives would be met and that the advantages would apply both to their character based applications and to their Delphi based Windows programs that communicated with the database. They found that the speed of the QM API interface was several times faster than the interface they had built using D3.

Any migration to a new platform requires some work and, partly because they embarked on this project before some of the compatibility improvements were introduced, they found it necessary to make changes in many Basic programs and several Delphi applications. There were some subtle differences between the code for D3 and QM, mostly to do with case sensitivity. They also decided to convert all S-type dictionary items to the more powerful I-types.

Was it worth it? Yes. James Woods, the senior programmer/analyst in charge of the migration project, said "after an intensive two weeks correcting a lot of problems with reports that malfunctioned because of dictionary differences, the problems have been resolved and we are very happy in the new environment. The users weren't too happy with us for those two initial weeks, but were understanding. Several have since commented on the faster response time".

Migration has had the benefit of providing a programming environment that has advanced features of QM that are not in D3. They plan to explore the opportunities of object oriented programming in QMBasic and are looking at several new projects that would not have been feasible in D3.

To maintain business continuity during the migration process, they ran QM on a separate development machine. Programs and dictionaries were converted on this system using a copy of the live application and then, when ready to switch to QM, they copied the latest data from the production machine to the new machine. They also deployed new Delphi programs on the same day.

Regarding support services, James Woods said "Ladybridge Systems is the most responsive Pick vendor I have ever experienced. It really gave us the feeling that if we were to hit a 'show stopper', they would have it fixed in two hours".

Looking to the future, James Woods added "QM has reduced the cost of adding new users. It also allowed us to remove restrictions on the number of open sessions, increasing productivity. It will provide a faster and richer environment for our new projects".