Client
Founded in 1921, Wilbur-Ellis is a leading international marketer and distributor of agricultural products, animal feed and specialty chemicals and ingredients.

The Challenge
Compelled to upgrade because its current solution was nearing end-of-support, Wilbur-Ellis wanted to reduce its current modified footprint and accurately estimate the level of effort required to retrofit all in-scope modifications to the 9.2 level.

Delivery
Wilbur-Ellis opted to use DWS Dimension Analyze™ to forensically analyze both the existing modified footprint and the net changes made by Oracle, down to a pixel level of detail.

Result
The DWS Dimension Analyze™ audit led to a 39% reduction in the modified footprint, which in turn saved a further 236 man days of retrofitting and associated testing.

About the Client
Wilbur-Ellis celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2011 and employs over 4,000 people in over 240 offices across three continents. It is comprised of three separate operating divisions that share a single worldwide ERP platform. The decision to consolidate all divisions to Oracle JD Edwards was made in 2003, with the original implementation project taking two years. A major upgrade to 9.0 followed in 2011. As it prepares for an upgrade to 9.2, Wilbur-Ellis runs a highly-modified instance of JD Edwards EnterpriseOne and has 1,500 active users.

JD Edwards EnterpriseOne Upgrade Impact Analysis
A DWS Client Success Story
Upgrade History

In 2011, Wilbur-Ellis undertook a major upgrade to JD Edwards EnterpriseOne 9.0.2. Like many long-term users of JD Edwards, they employed a policy of running a release until it nears end-of-support, deferring the process of upgrading until necessary.

Whilst this approach may mean a delay in accessing the latest functional and technical enhancements, it recognizes that upgrading a global ERP platform is a significant change event that inevitably results in some business disruption.

With Extended Support of 9.0.2 ending in November 2018, Wilbur-Ellis was already planning for an upgrade when Oracle JD Edwards announced in early 2017 that EnterpriseOne 9.2 would have extended support until at least 2028. The extended support announcement was a catalyst for them to accelerate their upgrade planning and analysis.

The Challenge

The previous upgrade to 9.0.2 was an 18-month project, involved 30,000 hours of effort and a project team of 8 business analysts, 2 full-time testers, 3 internal developers and some additional support from an outsourced development partner.

The challenge was to find a way to drastically reduce the time and effort required for the upgrade to 9.2, to improve the quality of the upgrade process and transform the end-user experience.

Impact Analysis

Wilbur-Ellis maintains a highly modified implementation of JD Edwards EnterpriseOne, with a significant number of custom objects utilized for critical business functions within Order-to-Cash. To accurately estimate the effort required for the upgrade to 9.2, the project team needed a detailed audit of the current modified footprint.

Choosing a Partner

Before committing to a partner for the upgrade itself, Wilbur-Ellis wanted to assess several potential suppliers; asking them to analyze the current JDE E1 implementation and provide an upgrade proposal.

“When we started out, there were four names in the hat; but this shortly became just one.”

Jenny Catlett, Director of Applications

DWS Dimension Analyze™

Dimension Analyze™ is a software-led service that audits your JD Edwards EnterpriseOne system, identifies what custom code is no longer required and estimates accurately the effort involved in upgrading to the new release.

The Audit

“The Wilbur-Ellis project is not your typical upgrade” explains Jenny. “The initial audit indicates over 5,300 hours of upgrade effort. We also have some significant mods; the top 5% of which, by object count, account for 63% of the total effort.”

“With 9.2 being supported to 2028 and beyond, this may well be the last major upgrade we need to do” emphasizes Jenny. “Having been through a couple of major release upgrades in the past, I know how important it is to have an accurate view of what objects will be impacted by the change event. Almost as important is knowing which objects won’t be affected, so won’t need retrofitting or testing.”
The Results

One of the key benefits of using Dimension Analyze™ was the acceleration of the functional and technical analysis of the modified footprint. Without it, not only would the audit have taken longer, but the uplift effort itself would have been significantly greater.

Dimension Analyze™ identified a 39% reduction in the modified footprint, saving a potential 236 days of effort. The revised footprint of 2,452 objects provided the foundation for upgrade planning, including resourcing, functional assessment and prioritizing, which may present opportunities to further reduce the modified footprint.

The worst-case scenario for any upgrade is to discover objects further down the line during testing, or even post-go-live, that have been impacted. “If we hadn’t used DWS and Dimension Analyze™, we wouldn’t have been as confident that we’d identified all affected objects” highlights Jenny.

“The initial investment in Dimension Analyze™ will be returned many times over because the project will be more predictable, with no nasty surprises along the way.”

Jenny Catlett, Director of Applications

The DWS Experience

The audit project represented the ideal opportunity for Wilbur-Ellis to get to know DWS. “This was our first opportunity to work with DWS”, says Jenny.

“The experience has been excellent throughout, with great feedback from everyone – including the technical team.”

Jenny Catlett, Director of Applications

"The degree of accuracy and depth of analysis was much greater than we could have done ourselves, and we couldn't spare the resource to do it properly," says Jenny. On the back of the audit, DWS was able to use the results of its analysis to provide Wilbur-Ellis with a fixed price for the retrofitting.

“This upgrade project looks and feels like it will be easier than last time around” says Jenny. “We believe that we will not only be retrofitting fewer objects but that we will see fewer defects. We will do the localisations internally, but our plans now include engaging DWS for the main uplift and for help with our testing.”

DWS offers fixed price, fixed timeline, near-zero-defect technical upgrade projects as well as testing products written specifically for JD Edwards EnterpriseOne.

A properly-scoped and well-managed retrofit effort during a wider 9.2 upgrade project will position Wilbur-Ellis well for the future. In the absence of a Release 9.3, Wilbur-Ellis will be well placed to regularly evaluate JD Edwards EnterpriseOne updates from Oracle and to adopt a code-current strategy.
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