

Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI)



Deltek Software Helps Educate Georgia Tech Research Institute

“Now we have access to real-time financial and project data across the whole enterprise.”

Charles Brown, Chief
Business Office with GTRI

THE CHALLENGE

Supporting approximately \$130 million in annual research, Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) strives to create technology and engineering solutions through innovation, on time and on budget. The nonprofit applied research arm of Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, GTRI assists more than 200 clients in federal, state, local and international government agencies, industrial firms, academic institutions and private organizations.

Until recently, this goal was becoming increasingly difficult to meet due to the nonprofit organization's homegrown financial accounting system. In use at GTRI since 1989, this legacy system comprised an IBM mainframe that required COBOL programming knowledge to extract financial and project data. In addition, this system was incapable of automating key project management tasks such as labor utilization, making it necessary to collect paper timesheets for each of the 1,200 employees at GTRI.

According to GTRI's Director of Business Services Julie Blankenship, this hard-to-use system was causing serious data integrity concerns among the organization's accounting and administration staff.

“Because the system was so difficult to use and access, we could only run reporting figures monthly,” she explained. “By the time we released financial and budget info, it was already stale. That was a huge concern. Handing project managers' out-of-date information means they're not working with the information they need to make sure their project is staying on track and within budget.”

In addition, employees were using paper timesheets to log their hours spent on each project, creating a chaotic approval process prone to human error. The administrative and finance staff at GTRI had to manually enter the billable hours of every employee into the organization's accounting system, after spending hours tracking down each paper timesheet in person.

Stats at a glance

Company Name

Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI)

Headquarters

Atlanta, GA

Employees

1,200

Primary Business

Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) is the nonprofit applied research arm of the Georgia Institute of Technology. Their employees perform or support more than \$100 million in research yearly for more than 200 clients in industry and government.

URL

www.gtri.gatech.edu

"It took at least four full-time people to track down and approve the timesheets of every employee," said Chief Business Officer Charles Brown. "Unfortunately, because each individual logged their time on paper timesheets, they would also often make transposition errors, such as listing wrong or defunct project numbers, that wouldn't be discovered until labor distribution was posted to our accounting system. Resolving these problems took at least three days on average per month to fix."

As Blankenship explained, the problem was further compounded by how the labor distribution data was posted to GTRI's accounting system. "Because we needed a week to enter all that data into our IBM mainframe, we had to get timesheet data in one week early – which meant every employee had to estimate the last week of their timesheets and turn in revised data at the end of every month," she said. "It was almost as much work to process these revisions than to process all the timesheets combined, taking up to a full week to correct on average."

THE SOLUTION

GTRI endured this process for nearly seven years before issuing an RFP to search for a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. After evaluating several software vendors, GTRI purchased the Deltek Enterprise suite, including back-office accounting solution Deltek Costpoint® and Enterprise Planner in 2003, followed by Deltek Time Collection in 2004. After a smooth implementation process, the organization began using Deltek to handle journal entries, cost transfers and labor distribution data for more than 550 active projects, the majority of which were with the federal government.

Furthermore, the company's IT staff built preprocessors so the Deltek solution could effectively integrate with its PeopleSoft system, used by the Georgia Tech campus to handle payroll, purchasing, accounts payable and human resources functions. "Personnel on campus saw first-hand that integration between the two systems was a relatively simple process," Brown said.

THE BENEFITS

After implementing Deltek, GTRI was able to restructure and streamline the organization by maximizing efficiency and reducing operational costs. Almost immediately, the organization eliminated the need for expensive maintenance costs – at least \$75,000 per year. In addition, GTRI was able to restructure their staff to better address their business needs.

Other tangible benefits include dramatic improvements in both the quality and accessibility of financial information, improved internal controls for audit compliance and a significant increase in accuracy and timeliness of organization data, particularly in regards to costing data. In addition, the system's architecture allows satellite offices and traveling employees to access critical financial and project data, as well as post timesheet information, from anywhere in the world using an Internet connection.

"Now we have access to real-time financial and project data across the whole enterprise," Brown said. "This allows us to catch data mistakes before they negatively affect our projects."

GTRI also currently uses Deltek to automate accounting processes as well as dynamically publish nearly two dozen external financial and project reports on a monthly basis. The reports are available to all employees on the Internet anytime.

THE CHALLENGE	THE SOLUTION	THE DELTEK ADVANTAGE
<p>GTRI's homegrown financial accounting system could not handle the organization's impressive growth.</p>	<p>GTRI chose the Deltek Enterprise suite, including back-office accounting solution Deltek Costpoint and Enterprise Planner in 2003, followed by Deltek Time Collection in 2004.</p>	<p>After a smooth implementation process, GTRI has access to real-time financial and project data across the entire enterprise.</p>

"In the past we had to print and mail all financial statements and reports to various project managers," Blankenship said. "This was not an efficient process, and it took nearly five days each month. Paper would get lost, and we'd have to reprint and resend all the project reports that had not arrived. Now reports are e-mailed out to all employees within the hour and posted to the Internet shortly after. In addition, we can now close each month in just hours, rather than the full day and a half it used to take."

According to Brown, other improvements include automated billing, a process that was previously handled manually using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. "With our old system, about 75 percent of our 300 monthly bills required some form of manual manipulation," he said. "Now more than 75 percent of our bills are created automatically with the push of a button, saving us both time and effort."

ABOUT GTRI

The Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) is a nonprofit applied research organization that operates as part of the Georgia Institute of Technology, a top-ranked academic and research university located in Atlanta, Ga. GTRI conducts world-class research, delivering leading edge, real-world solutions and training to industry and government organizations in Georgia, across the nation, and throughout the world.

GTRI's research activities are conducted within eight laboratories which have focused technical missions linked to one another by coordinated program thrusts. GTRI has established an international reputation for excellence in the areas of full-spectrum sensing, systems engineering, and test and evaluation, as well as health, energy, and environmental systems.

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Deltek is a global leader dedicated to delivering enterprise management software that meets the unique needs of project-focused organizations. With over two decades of experience, Deltek enables companies to maximize profitability and productivity, integrating all aspects of their businesses. More than 11,000 customers worldwide rely on Deltek to streamline operations, improve performance and win more business.

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