

EREG

The Land Registry in Northern Ireland exists as part of the Land & Property Services Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel for Northern Ireland. STCS undertook this project as a sub-contractor to BT which is the supplier to Land & Property Services.



PROJECT REQUIREMENT AND SCOPE

The Land Registry within Northern Ireland wished to allow electronic submission of conveyancing applications. The new submission process was intended to reduce the number of rejected applications by guiding users through the process and ensuring the correct information and evidence was supplied. Instant transferral of the information into the existing Registry systems would also reduce processing time, and improve management and tracking of applications.

The project started in September 2006 and was rolled out to a pilot group in December 2007.

TECHNICAL APPROACH

The system was developed as a J2EE web application using a Struts 1.0 framework.

STCS was asked to take over requirements analysis, design and development for the e-Registration system. Due to the complex legal nature of the application, a large number of stakeholders were involved, both within the Registry and the wider conveyancing community of Northern Ireland. To maximise usability within the legislative constraints, an approach of application prototyping and iterative development was adopted. STCS was responsible for evolving the design with the user community, and conducted regular presentations and consultation sessions to Registry staff and members of a solicitor's focus group. In addition to an intuitive user interface to guide conveyancers through the online process, the application used stored Oracle procedures and packages to interface with the existing Registry systems for registering land, which staff already used to input cases manually. An iText API was used to create printable, read only pdf forms containing the information entered for each transaction, allowing the forms to be signed by all interested parties.

Other aspects of the system included secure login and session management, a 'case folder' approach allowing solicitors to manage their applications and track their progress through the Registry, and various reporting tools. A Robohelp project was also created to give context sensitive help on the online process, as well as substantial legal guidance.

KEY TECHNOLOGIES USED

Languages: J2EE, JavaServer Pages, JavaScript, CSS, HTML/DHTML, PL/SQL.

MVC Model: Struts

Database: Oracle

Other: RoboHelp