



# Farm Credit Services of America

## Cross-Platform Mainframe Integration

Farm Credit Services of America provides loans, insurance, and financial services to farmers and ranchers in Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Based in Omaha, the company is part of the Farm Credit System, a \$140 billion nationwide network of farm credit providers. Recently, FCSAmerica faced a technology challenge with real business ramifications.

FCSAmerica personnel rely on four disparate systems – a Systematics loan accounting system running on an IBM System z mainframe, two loan origination products, and a customer relationship management (CRM) solution. Over time, lack of integration grew increasingly problematic, impacting productivity to the point that personnel were falling short of business goals. To solve their problem, FCSAmerica created a custom solution they call Pinwheel. To integrate their critical mainframe into Pinwheel, FCSAmerica chose HostBridge.

### Challenge

Because their systems were not integrated, FCSAmerica's personnel had to duplicate efforts repeatedly. Loan officers would enter data in a loan origination application and then, upon approval, perform the same inputs with the loan accounting system. When customer information was changed in the loan accounting system, data entry personnel had to key the same changes into the CRM system.

FCSAmerica needed an integration solution that would enable seamless multi-platform interaction, present data from all sources in a common, easy-to-use interface, and make critical mainframe data accessible on demand.

"Finding the right mainframe integration solution was a priority," says Mike Douglas, Lead Developer/Analyst at FCSAmerica. "The vast majority of our business is loans, so the loan accounting system on our mainframe is central to everything we do."

### Technical Requirements

The mainframe integration had several key requirements:

- *User-friendly presentation.* The integration solution had to display data and application screens in formats familiar to a PC-based work force.
- *Support for industry-standard protocols.* The solution had to HTTP, XML, and SOAP standards.
- *No changes to legacy applications.* Integration had to be accomplished without any changes to critical business logic.

FCSAmerica chose HostBridge to meet these mainframe integration needs.

### Real Integration

HostBridge products allow organizations to integrate CICS transactions into other enterprise systems, web-based applications (intranet, extranet, and Internet), or any service-oriented architecture. Interacting with terminal-oriented transactions, COMMAREA programs, and other CICS-managed resources, HostBridge delivers CICS output/input to distributed applications as standardized XML documents – without screen scraping or CICS system modification.

At FCSAmerica, HostBridge makes mainframe data and CICS screens accessible to employee-users through the CRM's web-based front end and plays a pivotal role in automated, platform-to-platform data exchanges.

#### About HostBridge

HostBridge is mainframe-based software that allows CICS applications and data to be accessed by, and integrated with, any type of distributed application. Fast, easy installation with no configuration provides immediate access to your CICS resources as XML documents or Web services.

No screen scraping  
No changes to existing CICS applications  
No middle tier servers

## Complete CICS Integration

- Support for BMS, 3270, COMMAREA, and Advantage CA-Ideal applications
- Support for CICS TS 3.x Direct VSAM, DB2, and DL/I data access
- Host-based process automation via JavaScript
- Enhanced multi-region operation (MRO) support
- HTTP, SOAP, LINK (ECI/EXCI), and WebSphere MQ interfaces

By delivering CICS data as XML, HostBridge enables users to access the loan accounting system through Pinwheel's web interface. Where they previously ran terminal emulation software and logged in to the mainframe as a disparate system, they now access relevant screens seamlessly by choosing a tab on the Pinwheel display. Financial officers, account managers, and others can access information from the loan accounting system – terms, rates, accruals, status, payoff information, and a wide range of customer data – on demand from their PCs. This is made possible by HostBridge's COMMAREA program functionality, which allows the server application to call a COMMAREA program to access data from a variety of files with a single pass. In addition, mainframe login is handled transparently.

HostBridge is also a central component in Pinwheel's automated data integration. Whenever any application is updated with new data, other applications are automatically updated with all relevant data. Whenever the mainframe is in the mix, HostBridge is the integration engine. If an account manager enters an address change in the CRM system, rules-based automation invokes HostBridge, which accesses the loan accounting system and updates the appropriate CICS screen. Similarly, when the mainframe is updated, HostBridge delivers the new data to Pinwheel. In addition, HostBridge is regularly called to provide mainframe data for automated decisioning.

## Real Benefits

FCSAmerica credits HostBridge with a range of benefits, from simplifying the integration process for IT staff to working within the Pinwheel system to generate productivity gains and new business.

HostBridge was easy to install. In just a few hours, the IT team had accessed the mainframe through a URL. On the development side, HostBridge's adherence to SOAP and XML standards and its built-in .NET components streamlined Pinwheel integration.

By far the biggest benefit is the way HostBridge, as a key component of Pinwheel, helped FCSAmerica regain lost productivity. The company has eliminated the extensive training previously needed to access the CICS system. More impressive, some FCSAmerica teams have experienced a 70 percent improvement in productivity – due largely to on-demand availability of loan and customer data and elimination of duplicated efforts. Also since implementing Pinwheel and integrating the mainframe through HostBridge, FCSAmerica has increased new business by more than 16 percent per year. In the first year alone, daily loan volume grew from \$10 million to \$12 million – without any increase in staff.

## Contact Information

For more information on HostBridge or to inquire about our free 30-day trial, please contact us using the information below.

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