



HostBridge Simplifies CICS Application Integration

"Today, IBM customers use CICS to process over 30 billion transactions per day with a commercial value of several trillion dollars per week. By allowing these customers to XML-enable existing transactions without code changes, HostBridge demonstrates how easily CICS transactions can be integrated into rapidly deployed and highly scalable e-business applications."

Dr. Geoff Sharman
Senior Consultant
IBM Transaction Systems

HostBridge makes CICS applications "integration-ready" without changing the existing applications and without screen scraping. Integration-ready applications are those that support event-driven interfaces for sending, receiving, and processing business events. The degree to which applications are integration-ready determines how quickly and easily you can integrate them with other applications. If the applications are integration-ready, you can easily integrate them and lower implementation costs. If applications are not integration-ready, implementation will be significantly more expensive and complicated because you must modify the applications themselves. The benefits and cost savings associated with using HostBridge to make your CICS applications integration-ready is obvious compared to reengineering:

- Faster project completion
- Reduced development time (by eliminating the need to plan, implement, and test rewriting a stable application that has been debugged throughout years of use)
- Preservation of existing terminal access and product functionality while providing simultaneous application access and new functionality

The following are some of the features of HostBridge and XML that simplify integration, extend the lives of CICS applications, and ease the headaches CICS administrators and programmers feel throughout integration projects.

Easy to Use and Standards-Based

HostBridge is easy to install, use, and maintain. Installation takes less than an hour and all CICS applications are immediately XML-enabled and available for use in your integration projects. The use of well-formed and documented XML makes it easy for web developers to access and use CICS data without additional training on proprietary scripting languages or development environments. Thus, the costs usually associated with learning how to use middle-tier solutions decrease when using HostBridge.

HostBridge is interoperable with other applications that use industry standards such as XML. By adopting industry standards HostBridge ensures that integration solutions will not become obsolete. Reliance upon standards also ensures that future developers will have the necessary skills to maintain and build upon work done by today's developers.

Simplifies Change Management

HostBridge provides significant reductions in change management costs versus screen-scraping and reengineering application interfaces. Simple changes to the CICS applications can break any integration solution based upon screen scraping. In this case, developers must reengineer the integration solution (for example, screen-scraping instructions) to reflect changes to host screens and data locations. HostBridge does *not* depend on screen geometry to capture application data. Changes to the screens of CICS applications do *not*

"HostBridge simplifies entering data, validating data, and providing access to more information."

Brian Spears
Director of IT, Konica

"We chose HostBridge because of its simple and straightforward approach."

Alessandro Casati
Bipop-Carire

"HostBridge delivers 'tera-productivity' to users and programmers of CICS applications and data. It makes big things possible, without having to abandon ship and start all over again."

- Clipper Group

interfere with HostBridge's ability to return requested data, thus reducing change management problems associated with integration.

Stable and Reliable

Integration technologies such as web-to-host gateways usually run on middle-tier servers where system crashes and application "hangs" are commonplace. The many layers that make up middle-tier solutions make them susceptible to failure and slowdowns, either of which affect the reliability of the integration solutions themselves. HostBridge has as few "moving parts" as possible. It provides the reliability that mainframe application administrators expect and runs under mainframe operating systems known for their stability.

Enables Advanced Error-Handling

In any application, errors can occur and it is important that diagnostic information is available to an end user or requesting application. On their own, middle-tier integration solutions have limited access to diagnostic information. When errors occur they often return bad data or no data to applications trying to access CICS. This forces middle-tier administrators to contact the mainframe administrators so they can diagnose the root cause of the problem and take corrective action. Because of these problems, developers often spend as much time building error-checking facilities as doing real application integration. HostBridge captures error codes and abend data from the host and passes that information to the external applications within an XML document. The external application can read the errors and immediately notify administrators what corrective action to take based upon company policies. This takes the guesswork out of solving problems and allows developers to focus on integration rather than defensive programming.

Facilitates Application Migration

While many companies continue to make strategic investments in proven mainframe systems, others choose to migrate their applications to other platforms as part of their EAI or eBusiness efforts. HostBridge is a valuable part of a migration strategy. Once installed, HostBridge instantly XML-enables your CICS applications so web developers can immediately use existing knowledge of XML to invoke CICS transactions and retrieve application data. Thus, you can quickly see the benefits of integration without having to wait for migration projects to finish. Moreover, because web applications will already be receiving corporate data in XML, you can make seamless transitions to the new platforms when you complete your migration projects.

Conclusion

Application integration is usually time-consuming and expensive. It requires the adoption of an integration framework, adapters, and human resources. HostBridge provides a streamlined solution that works alone or within an existing framework and requires little effort to implement. Its unique ability to produce well-formed XML documents improves error-handling, simplifies change management, and allows you to make nearly seamless migrations to new systems and or platforms. For companies integrating CICS applications with eBusiness technologies, HostBridge saves time, saves money, and prevents the frustration that usually accompanies integration.

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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