



White paper

Let's just rewrite the whole thing

Counting the cost of rewriting legacy software products

www.stdtime.com
Scoutwest, Inc.

Let's just rewrite the whole thing

I was once a participant in a major project to rewrite our company's two flagship products from scratch, simultaneously! The effort came at a time when both products could have used some badly needed updates. Instead of making the minor updates, the products were completely rewritten from scratch in a new language. The effort took two years. The reason we did it: the language was "cool." The result: the company tanked. The long development stall created an opportunity for the competition to exploit, and the company lost new and existing customers to competitive products.

Every company that is in business for more than a few years faces this issue. Cool new software development technologies and languages arise, and old ones go away. If your product uses the old ones, there is an inherent fear that your company will become less attractive to cutting-edge developers who are more proficient with the new ones. Plus new technologies have the potential to offer your customers more value. You must move on to new technologies and development languages.

So, how does a company rewrite its flagship products for new technologies, in completely new development languages? Unless the products use component technologies that allow isolated parts to be rewritten, you'll need to employ overlapping development teams – one team for new development, and another for ongoing maintenance. In either case, it is usually imperative that your existing product maintains a steady course of improvement necessary to satisfy new and existing customers. Customers must not sense an extended development stall, but you must still move forward.

Developing products is like owning a home. You must do regular maintenance, and perform major remodeling from time to time. This requires long term planning and financing. You can't afford not to do it.

About Us

Scoutwest, Inc. develops and publishes project management and time tracking products for consulting, manufacturing, government, and general business applications.

Thousands of small to large businesses, in dozens of countries worldwide, trust their mission critical business processes to Scoutwest products. Standard Time® and Standard Issue® work together to offer well-rounded project management solutions.

We specialize in packaged software for timesheets, project management, time tracking, defect tracking, and issue tracking. Standard Time is a web-based timesheet that also runs on Windows, Palm OS, and Pocket PC. It can be used for client billing and task management. Standard Issue is used for bug tracking and general issue tracking.

Please visit these web sites for more information.

www.stdtime.com
www.sdtissue.com