

WHITEPAPER

Vantage360™

The Next Generation Architecture:
A New User Experience

Whitepaper
Accela, Inc.

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The Next Generation Architecture: A New User Experience

Overview

For more than three decades, government agencies have aimed to implement automated solutions that aggregate and manage critical jurisdiction information. However, these solutions have rarely met the needs of both the agency and its individual departments.

Existing automation solutions essentially replace paper file systems with disconnected electronic databases. These database-driven solutions are useful within a department to streamline processes, but the agency still has challenges driving overall efficiency by interconnecting data and information – data has to be entered into systems multiple times, increasing the likelihood of mistakes and conflicting data; staff members are unable to generate comprehensive reports across departments; employees do not have access to relevant information from other departments; and IT resources are overloaded with demands to force compatibility between these disparate systems.

What exists today are “disconnected silos”—individual departments that exist and function well on their own but do not have compatibility or connectivity to other departments. Increasingly, individuals within the agency are demanding greater flexibility from these systems—centralized databases, easy to use interfaces, and sophisticated reporting capabilities. Government agencies are faced with a complex and pressing challenge – finding an enterprise software solution that will bridge the gaps between departments and drive efficiencies not just for the agency, but also for individual users.



disparate systems translate into “disconnected silos”

The Next Generation Architecture of Enterprise Government Applications

With the goal of transcending the disparate systems that plague today's government agencies, a new architectural paradigm must be realized and implemented. This new architecture will promote the following five characteristics:

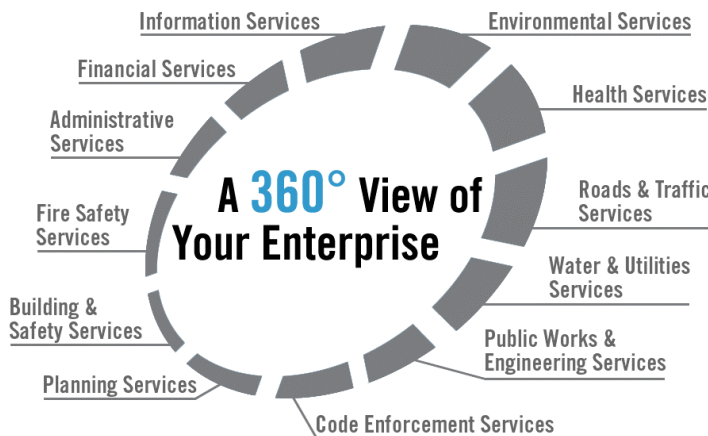
1. The system provides a complete enterprise solution for all jurisdictions – The users must have access to all information, providing them with a complete view of the customer. Additionally, current industry data exchange practices are costly and inefficient. By streamlining the process and creating a unified strategy to facilitate the exchange of information, there will be significant cost savings potential for the entire jurisdiction.
2. Solutions are implemented at the user level – The fact that individual departments implemented their own software solutions illustrates the need for user flexibility. While the information may be pulled from a central database or several databases, the solution must be user-focused. In other words, provide an agency-wide solution that is adaptable enough at the user level to allow a choice of how the information is used.
3. The user-interface should be personalized – A dynamic interface would allow users to personalize their display window so that it is populated with data that is important to them and relevant to their job role—a personalized console of data. A permit clerk in the building and planning office may want to highlight different information than a manager in that same department.
4. The solution provides direct access to government citizens – Citizens should be able to access real-time information with this solution. Whether they want to file a complaint or check on the status of a permit or license, citizens will be able to access the system and get up-to-date information.
5. The solution co-exists and interfaces seamlessly with other applications – Adoption of new systems will not be simultaneous for all departments. As such, an effective solution will provide an architecture open enough to allow users to easily integrate with other applications that need to be used.

Introducing Vantage360

Accela develops enterprise systems for permitting, planning, licensing, public health, emergency response, and many other processes for government agencies of all sizes. Accela's software solutions manage critical public sector applications for thousands of departments. Accela is now building upon its existing solutions by promoting a new product architecture that offers a next generation experience. The Vantage360 architecture provides the ability to view information from a user's unique perspective without the limitations of traditional systems.

Vantage360 Provides a Complete 360 View of the Government Enterprise

By providing a common framework, standardized interfaces, and an open architecture, Vantage360 provides the infrastructure that offers agencies a complete “360” view of their total government enterprise. Additionally, the system will provide a comprehensive self-service function that integrates seamlessly with the jurisdiction Web site or existing e-government portal.



User-Centric Approach

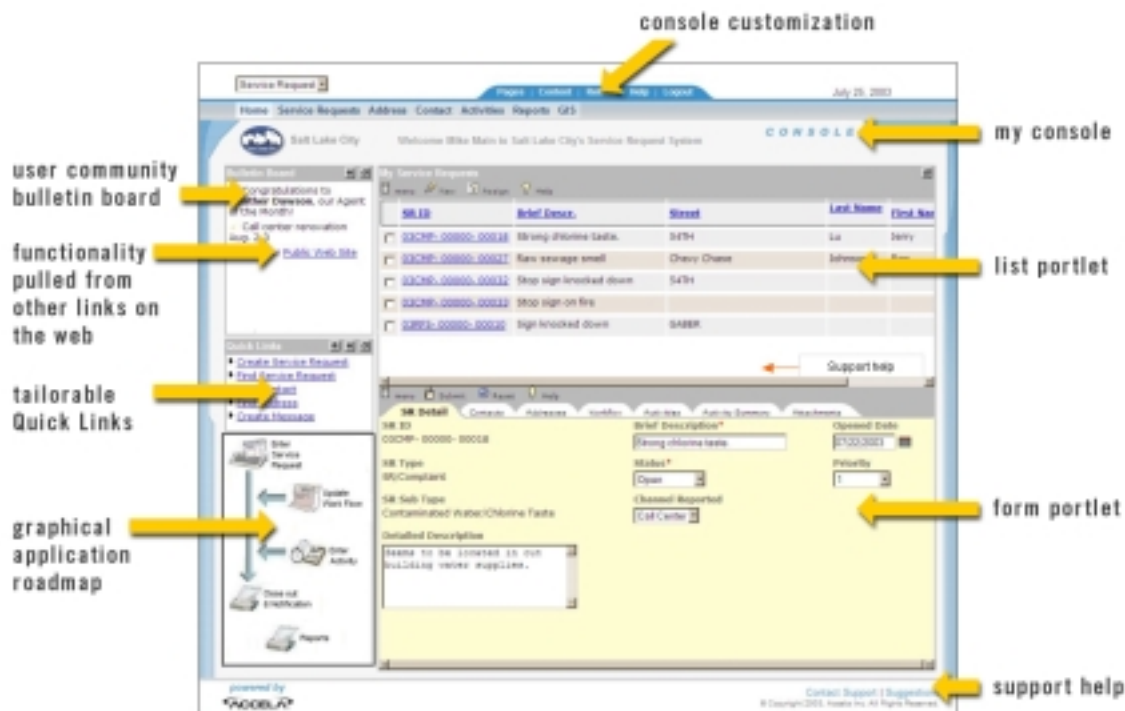
Traditional implementations were really departmental implementations, meaning the system level access is analogous for all job roles and functions. Vantage360 takes an alternative path with a user-centric approach. This approach architects a solution that is implemented at the user level, breaking down the traditional barriers of departmental implementations and the notion of silos of information. Departmental barriers are now disregarded and any databases from the enterprise can be accessed per the user specification.



integrated information resources:
interact with information from any perspective

Personalized Consoles for All Users

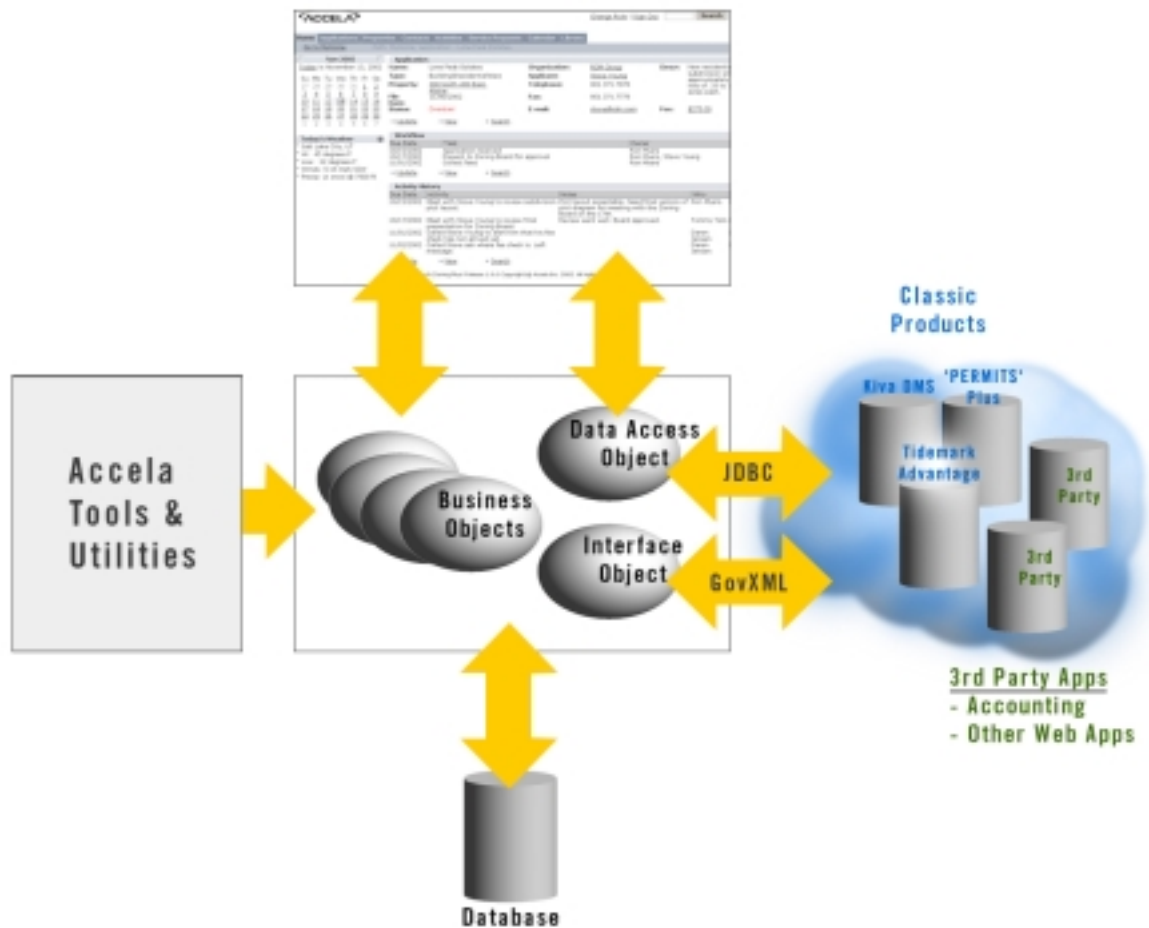
Vantage360 provides users with a custom-tailored **Console** that puts them in command of their daily tasks and provides them with a complete view of any customer, record, complaint, violation, or any other required information. Each individual user has the ability to personalize his/her own custom **Console** from a list of “portlets” or “business functions” and display information that is most relevant to their role at the agency. Mayors, managers, clerks, administrators, and even citizens have the ability to personalize their own **Console** and view information from a vantage that best serves their way of interacting with agency data.



Coherent Co-existence Product Strategy

The new architecture understands that Vantage360 products must co-exist with current product platforms (Accela Automation, Kiva DMS, 'PERMITS' Plus, and Tidemark Advantage). Therefore, Vantage360 provides access points to critical agency information that is housed in traditional Accela products and provides a Web-browser solution to the Windows-based product family.

The new architecture also provides an open architecture, flexible, standards-based interface in order to be compatible with existing applications such as human resource, finance, and many other third-party product applications.



Conclusion

Accela's Vantage360 challenges the traditional models set forth by existing software implementations. From an agency standpoint, Vantage360 provides them with an automated system that effectively connects their "disconnected silos" and helps them manage the critical jurisdiction information of their departments. The new paradigm no longer requires government agencies to approach implementations at the department level. Rather, Vantage360 puts the individual user in command of their system, providing them with an easy-to-use solution to manage their tasks based on their agency role. Most importantly, users are empowered with a personalized console that gives them access to agency data in the way they need to see it to get their jobs done.