

INTRODUCTION

IT consultancy—AA Projekts—partners with Tasktop to support the software delivery organization at the Latvia State Revenue Service (SRS), the principal authority responsible for the collection of taxes and custom duties. The SRS IT department is responsible for 30+ business critical IT systems and services built and largely maintained by external providers. The software delivery and change management of these systems is managed through a complex network of tools integrated by Tasktop. The SRS is able to connect, visualize and automatically trace all interrelated work items from ideation to operation. The IT department can extract and combine key performance data from each tool into a centralized database, simplifying the cross-tool reporting process to turn technical data into real-time IT and business intelligence. The partnership is helping the Latvian government to be a software innovator so it can effectively support core programs for the country.

THE CHALLENGE

The SRS is always looking to deliver value to the government and the taxpayer. While the IT organization plays a key role in supporting key government programs, there was a lack of automated and comprehensive visibility and traceability into the software delivery work that spanned a large product and services portfolio built and maintained by a host of internal and external providers. The process of obtaining valuable information to support the business for key decision-making was simply too cumbersome and slow.

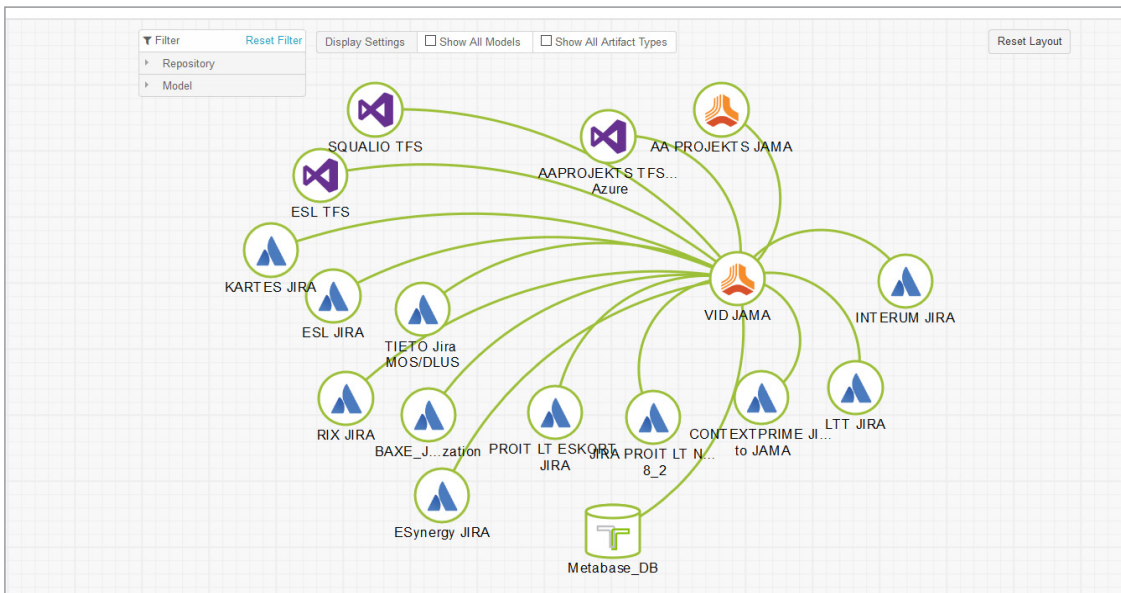
While a centralized system to track portfolio work existed, the digital demands of the business had

outpaced the legacy system. As use cases were added over time, the unwieldy system had grown to more than 1000 customer data fields per ticket item, making it hard to use and update. Furthermore, the system didn't provide the specialist functionality required by providers across the software delivery process, who instead used their own domain-specific tool to carry out and track their slice of the value stream. However these tools—including Jama, a custom-made helpdesk, and Atlassian Jira and Azure DevOps for development—were disconnected, providing IT with a fragmented view of their work.

“We realized it was crucial to improve the way information flowed across the tool network in an efficient, timely and precise manner,” explains Kārlis Broders, CTO at AA Projekts. “There were too many manual steps to share key data that were error prone, sometimes inaccurate and often lacked context of the work. The business had no efficient way to see what was really going on. No way to easily build historical trend analysis for data-driven continuous improvement.”

While outsourcing has clear benefits for public service organizations, it also adds huge complexity when trying to trace and analyze work, especially in terms of the compliance process to check, evaluate and approve tickets for customer requests. “How do you know if requirements are being met properly, that contracts are being adhered to, whether the external development teams have capacity for new work to meet key program initiatives?” he continues. “Without a means to automate and visualize the data flow between tools, it's a minefield that requires astounding manual work.”





The SRS uses Tasktop Hub's point-and-click landscape view to visualize the complex flow of work across their product portfolio.

THE SOLUTION

AA Projekts sought a way to connect the SRS's tool network to improve cross-team communication and process efficiency, as well as help the department become self-sufficient in generating custom reports for business analysis.

"That's when we found Tasktop, which continuously synchronizes the huge levels of data between tools," explains Kārlis. "It was the only enterprise-grade solution that provided the stability and robustness demanded by large-scale organizations. Tasktop can withstand all weather conditions even when it gets a bit rough. Despite the heavy daily load of thousands of items being synced every day—and the continual changes to the configuration and tool landscape as suppliers change—Tasktop never stops working."

AA Projekts was able to integrate the SRS's whole development environment to see into the value streams of the 30+ strong product portfolio. Harnessing Tasktop's easy-to-use, reliable and scalable integration and data streaming capabilities, the SRS has a cost-effective, low effort, high-performance means to accelerate the flow of work, as well as simplify, collect, normalize and centralize the vast sea of data for razor-sharp reporting.

BENEFITS

The SRS is now self-sufficient in handling changes and setting up new integrations between teams and tools, automating the flow of work and extracting live data from its toolchains into a common datastore. "The in-house IT teams can set up their own integration in just a few clicks," beams Kārlis. "This capability is key as disruption often arrives in the form of contract changes and an evolving environment with new providers and tools."

The SRS was able to automate a live data stream across the whole toolchain, internal and external, for automated traceability and faster cross-tool reporting. "The SRS tools team could see the whole system, not just a single part, to analyze processes for data-driven continuous improvement," he adds.

By unlocking the data from the tools, the SRS was able to own its data; many tool vendors purge their data periodically to save on storage, limiting access to historical data to help with trend analysis. "Thanks to Tasktop, the data is collected from numerous different tools and is already structured and begging to be turned into powerful insights," he expands. "The SRS can take this precious data and use business intelligence and data visualization tools to generate meaningful reports. Their team can easily create, recreate, update and analyze and invent new data visualizations, as well establish current and historic trends and reports."

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The sophisticated data stream, Kārlis emphasizes, enables tight control of operations. “The team can cherry pick whatever they want in a very simple way and present it on a platter for management and leadership. The Tasktop team was an immense help too, who are really the ones responsible for this happening. All the novel and cutting-edge ideas for the solutions came from them and of course the in-depth expertise on the subject that was of immense importance to making this initiative a success.”

The SRS’s journey is ongoing as it continues to be regarded as the leader in the country within the government sector and Enterprise IT. AA Projekts is working closely with their client to explore more opportunities to improve business performance and bring data to everyday users in an insightful and easy to consume manner.

“We’re also looking at how to use the [Flow Framework](#)® to extract even more business value for our clients,” concludes Kārlis. “This is a specific kind of challenge as we are looking to bridge gaps that exist between a client and an outsourced custom software development company – these contractual gaps don’t exist within a company that has their developers in-house. With Tasktop, we and the SRS are proving that it is possible to have fast and precise delivery flows with the necessary feedback cycles within these kinds of environments – kind of disproving the mandate that it is absolutely key to have developers on site. Like the Latvian government with the SRS at the forefront and the larger tech community here, we’re always looking for the best solutions in software development to give ourselves and our clients that vital edge.”

Lita Marnauza, Deputy Director of Information Technology at the State Revenue Service, shares her experience so far: “The State Revenue Service is one of the biggest Latvian state information system providers and developers. Being able to automate and visualize the flow of software development work is vital in helping us to gauge our progress and manage the process more effectively.

Previously, we had to manually manage and track work with Microsoft Word, Excel and one customized off-the-shelf solution. We would spend hundreds of hours gathering project information across SRS departments, suppliers, auditors and other institutions to understand the status of requirements, coordinating projects, tracking budgets and so on.

Now with Tasktop and Jama, we can track all work in one place and can be more much flexible in our approach. This makes tracking work, adjusting funds and resources, adapting to new work coming in, incorporating new processes and changing suppliers much easier and faster. The vast time-saving in manual work allows us to focus our energies on coming up with new ideas and innovative solutions to improve the value we deliver to government and the country.”

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Tasktop is the leader in value stream integration and visualization. It catalyzes the shift from Project to Product for global enterprises and governments, enabling them to innovate and thrive in the Age of Software.



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