

# Strategies

from Strategic Business Systems

## Application Modernization

*Have you ever had a user tell you they “never want to see another green screen again” or ask when they can have a “desktop-based” application?*

*Would you like to run your existing AS/400® green screen programs through a web browser?*

*Do you have customers or casual users who need browser access to AS/400 applications?*

Application Modernization is making old looking applications (typically terminal-based programs) look like new. This usually involves implementing a graphical user interface running on a desktop or a web browser.

When our company decided to modernize our AS/400 RPG terminal-based Motor Vehicle industry software packages, we investigated the options available.

Several strategies can modernize AS/400 terminal-based applications:

- Re-write the applications using a different technology
- Use a “web-facing” tool to convert existing applications
- Buy a Graphical User Interface (GUI) front-end for existing applications

Re-writing an application is a big job. Learning a technology and then immediately embarking on an application re-write is a very risky proposition.

While we had the expertise in web-based development using LANSAs for the Web, we didn't have the time or budget to do a complete re-write of our Motor Vehicle applications. We chose to re-write just the high-volume dealer-facing programs as native web tasks. That project was very successful, but only addressed 1% of the programs in our applications.

We considered using a web-facing tool to take AS/400 workstation application source code and run it through a conversion process. The output of a



**newlook:** The good looks of a GUI with the ability to customize

web-facing tool is an application converted to run through a web browser. Generally, web-facing has several difficulties, including:

- You have to have the source code to web-face an application.
- Web-facing a purchased software package means that you will be changing every interactive program in the package. This will likely void any warranty and make updates to the package nearly impossible.
- Web-browser applications are not optimized for high-volume use. They tend to be slow and generally have somewhat awkward user interfaces.
- Not everyone likes a web-browser user interface. If you keep your workstation version, you will have double program maintenance on any application program that you change.
  - A web-facing tool will usually give you a terminal-looking application running in a web browser.
  - Just testing applications converted using a web-facing tool is a big job.

Slow performance and an awkward user interface were enough for us to reject this approach.

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### 30-Day Free Trial Offer

See your applications in **newlook**  
FREE - contact us!

### Demos On Demand

**newlook**  
Content Management

## Strategic Expertise

*Strategic Business Systems* has been providing successful solutions for over 20 years.

We offer expertise in the following areas:

### e-business Implementation

- Business Process Analysis
- e-business Strategy Formulation
- Financial Justification

### Infrastructure

- Local Area Networks
- Internet Connectivity
- Security and Firewalls
- Virtual Private Networks

### Servers

- IBM AS/400 and PC hardware
- Internet server configuration
- Novell
- Microsoft
- Lotus Domino

### Applications

- RPG Application Development and Maintenance
- LANSAs Application Development and Maintenance
- Web and Internet Application Development and Maintenance
- Graphical Interface Design for existing terminal applications
- Secure remote server access via the Internet

### Content Management

- Document Imaging
- Computer Output Management Systems
- Proof of Delivery

## Strategic Contacts

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Finally, we considered using a Graphical User Interface for our applications. There are several GUI application products in the marketplace. They take a character-based terminal screen and make it operate like a graphical client-based application. To evaluate the different products, our Motor Vehicle group decided upon a selection criteria. The product would be required to:

- Operate both as a Windows client and in a web browser, as needed
- Allow users to keep the existing character-based user interfaces
- Avoid program changes in order to implement
- Dynamically react to changes in the underlying screens
- Avoid double maintenance whenever we changed a screen
- Give a good-looking GUI without customization, but allow customization to implement high-value function where economic justification existed
- Use the PC client's idle CPU to implement the GUI, not the AS/400
- Integrate AS/400 terminal-based and desktop applications

There was only one GUI application product that met all of our criteria. That product was *newlook*.

### Implementing newlook – Motor Vehicle Customers

Our first Motor Vehicle customer to use *newlook* was AM General (Manufacturer of HUMMER® vehicles) in South Bend, Indiana. The only customization that we made was to put a picture of a HUMMER H1 on the AS/400 sign-on screen. We changed the user's desktop icon that previously started a "Client Access" session to start *newlook*. The response from the users was immediate.

Walter Beall, Customer Service and Warranty Manager said it best. "You didn't tell me that you were writing a new warranty system for me ... thanks!" It wasn't a new system, just the existing system with *newlook* providing its default dynamic graphical user interface.

Our Motor Vehicle industry application now comes with *newlook* as a standard feature!

### Implementing newlook – Local Customers

Our Motor Vehicle experience with *newlook* led us to show it to several of our local AS/400 customers. They loved it!

**Goya Foods**, Secaucus New Jersey, the premier purveyor of authentic Latino specialties, uses *newlook* to modernize their Food Broker Inquiry System. From a classic green screen application, they created a graphical interface and added a picture of the specific broker. Now, management has information on product movement and broker performance in an easy-to-use and view format.

Application modernization with *newlook* can make you a hero. With a very minor investment, you can transform your green-screen applications to run as great-looking Windows or Web-browser sessions. Best of all, you can make this happen without needing to touch a line of the underlying application's source code or spending a single AS/400 CPU cycle! With our free 30-day trial, you have nothing to lose!

*For a free 30-day trial offer, contact Strategic at 1-800-727-7260!*