

AJ Bell improves compliance and accelerates development with IBM Rational DOORS.

Overview

■ **Challenge**

AJ Bell, the U.K.'s largest privately owned provider of Self Invested Personal Pension Schemes (SIPPs) need a requirements management solution that could link and trace requirements, yet be easy for all stakeholders to use.

■ **Solution**

IBM Rational DOORS offers powerful traceability features that are easy to learn and use.

■ **Key benefits**

AJ Bell responds faster to compliance issues, accelerates development, and improves stakeholder collaboration.



The story

AJ Bell, Manchester, U.K., specializes in the provision of trustee, administration and actuarial services for Self Invested Personal Pensions (SIPP) and Small Self Administered Schemes (SSAS).

AJ Bell had been using a requirements management (RM) solution that could handle the volume of information to design improved SIPP and SSAS administration systems but could not produce the documentation that the

various stakeholders needed. The company then switched to a popular desktop software suite. However, the suite provided no linking or structure for tracing requirements. Even though the documentation was easy to access, the stakeholders did not have what they needed to manage and understand all requirements. It was also virtually impossible to trace requirements when needed to meet financial regulatory compliance.

“We needed a solution that could link requirements together and provide traceability that flowed as natural English,” says Bernard Yardley, Business Analysis Director, AJ Bell Ltd. “All of our stakeholders at every level needed easy access to requirements information.”

No alternative to IBM Rational DOORS

After doing a competitive analysis of several solutions, AJ Bell selected IBM® Rational® DOORS® software for RM and installed it at the Manchester headquarters in 2007. According to Yardley, it took a couple of months to convince management that they needed to invest in the Rational DOORS solution, even though they already had “free” tools in their existing software suite. But after a one-month pilot project, everyone was convinced that there was no alternative to Rational DOORS software.

“Rational DOORS is perfect for our needs,” Yardley says. “The interface is so simple that you can just sit down and start using it: the learning curve is very small. People can get it with little training. Also, you can build the matrix (process) around the documents.”

Rational DOORS software has exceeded AJ Bell’s requirement for an RM solution that all stakeholders can easily use. All business requirements and stakeholder requirements are added and managed in the solution. AJ Bell’s business analysts are the “power users” who rely on DOORS software for nearly everything they do. The company’s system analysts take the business analysis specs and requirements and build the links to all deliverables in Rational DOORS software. Project managers can track changes, trace requirements, and run impact analysis to help keep all projects on time, as well as manage requirements changes from the business analysts and system analysts.

DOORS software also helps AJ Bell more efficiently input and manage the massive amount of regulatory information from FSA and HMRC. The AJ Bell department responsible for managing regulatory compliance continues to add the regulatory changes and amendments to the solution. The business analysts can create requirements from these legislative changes and updates and then run an impact analysis to assess what they and AJ Bell need to do to stay in line with the legislation.

“In the finance industry you have to be on top of all legislation and market fluctuations,” Yardley says. “Everyone has to read and understand what the company is doing. With DOORS, documentation is easily produced and there is strong discipline in its creation. Stakeholders are all involved, and understanding and control are much easier and delivered better.”

The benefits

“DOORS had proved its worth before the one month pilot project was over — the value could be seen by stakeholders before it was fully rolled out,” Yardley says. “It’s easy for everyone to use, yet it’s the most powerful RM solution.”

In addition to helping improve AJ Bell’s requirements management process, IBM Rational DOORS also benefitted the company with:

- *Faster and easier response to compliance issues with requirements traceability.*
- *Improved consistency in the production and management of requirements.*
- *Accelerated development time as a result of better stakeholder collaboration.*

In the near future, AJ Bell plans to use DOORS software to also manage wider project deliverables such as external literature and training materials. The company is also considering IBM Rational Change and IBM Rational Synergy software for iterative development next year.

While AJ Bell considered DOORS software, Yardley adds that AJ Bell also benefited from the quality of the training provided by the IBM Corporation.

“The training from IBM is first class,” Yardley says. “Not just for the product, but for RM skills and practices. Beyond the tool training, which is excellent, the IBM team’s knowledge of what is needed to deliver successful RM implementation is second to none.”

For more information

To learn more about IBM Rational DOORS software, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit:

ibm.com/software/rational

“IBM’s knowledge of what is needed to deliver successful Requirements Management implementation is second to none.”

— Bernard Yardley,
Business Analysis Director,
AJ Bell Ltd.



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