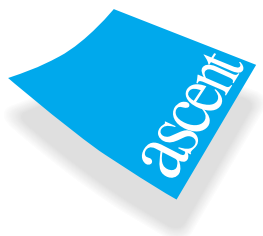


elevate your business

solutions for **workflow management**





Ascent for Workflow Management can help you to automate business processes across the whole organisation. In a world where improving customer service and increasing efficiency is a constant aim, getting the right information to the right person with the right skills at the right time is essential in any business process. Implementing Ascent for Workflow Management will help you achieve this goal as your organisation benefits from standardised procedures, reduced errors and duplication of effort, increased productivity and best use of resources, together with reduced lead times and increased service levels.

A solution to take your business forward

Most businesses have successfully automated many business tasks, using software to replace manual paper systems. But businesses find it more difficult to automate procedures which involve a number of different people and their commercial systems. With Ascent you can automate business processes across your whole organisation and wherever a user can access their Microsoft Exchange or Outlook client or via a web browser they can participate in a business process.

Ascent is a production-class workflow system which allows you to exploit and extend your existing Microsoft Exchange infrastructure, rather than deploying a stand-alone, traditional client/server workflow application.

The Internet has transformed the way we disseminate information both inside and outside the organisation. The take-up of intranet and messaging technologies provides a very cost effective way of disseminating information, and web technology provides guaranteed networking capabilities. Most companies looking to implement a workflow solution will want to exploit the benefits of internet languages and protocols to fuel their workflow practices and Ascent is a web-enabled solution designed with the vision of how organisations will do business in the future.

With the unique support of Microsoft technologies and the power of the Internet, you can even extend these benefits outside your organisation to customers, suppliers and other partners in your supply chain.

The solution, at work within your business

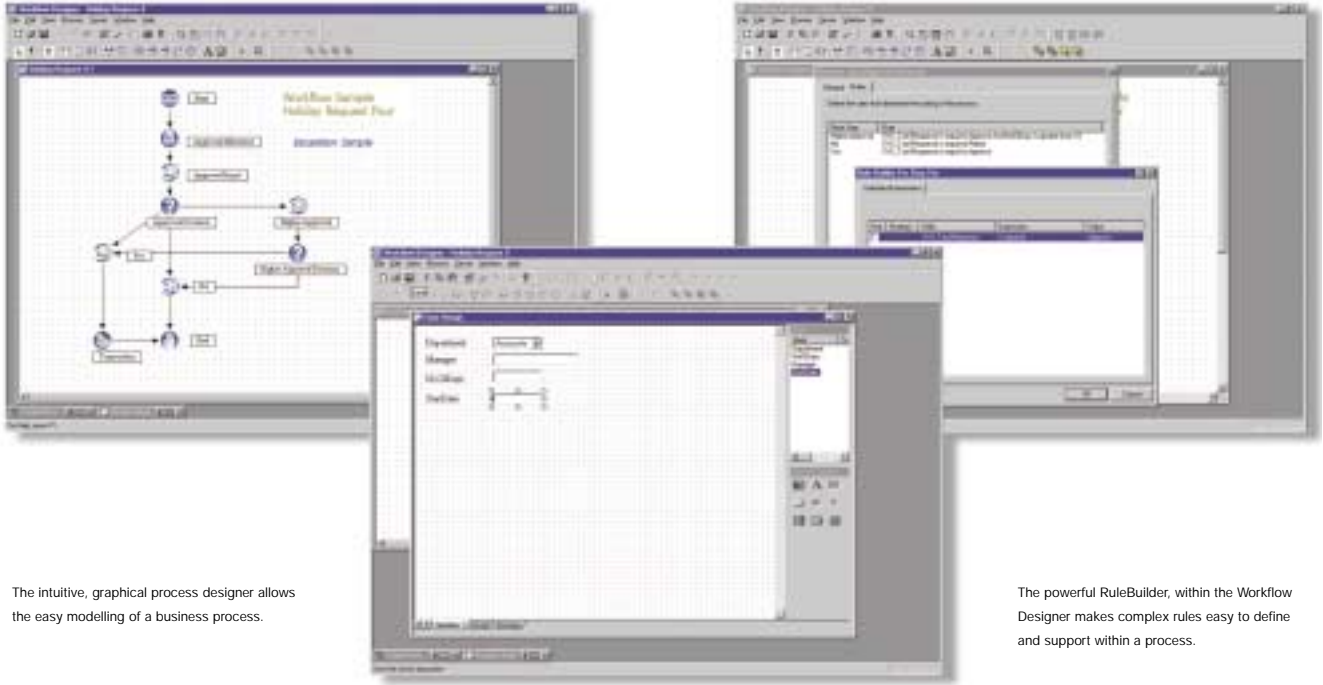
Ascent replaces the paper documents of a manual workflow system with electronic forms and documents. Procedures and instructions for tasks are delivered with the form and staff receive tasks directly into their In-box.

Employees do not have to understand the whole procedure, as only the information and instructions relevant to them need appear, eliminating errors and enabling even new employees to follow company procedures correctly.

Rules can be built into the workflow system so that decisions about where to route documents are made automatically, taking account of individual skills and current workloads.

Users can attach Word documents, spreadsheets, scanned material and other electronic information to a workflow process. Commercial and other system databases can be browsed automatically, retrieving information required for the process, and updates made directly to these databases to post specific information collated during the process.

Ascent makes it very easy for business managers to design even sophisticated business processes and deploy them immediately without the need for client-side installation. Work need no longer get lost or duplicated as Ascent provides visibility of what is happening where, when and why at all times.



The intuitive, graphical process designer allows the easy modelling of a business process.

The powerful RuleBuilder, within the Workflow Designer makes complex rules easy to define and support within a process.

It is easy to design e-forms to suit your own business processes using the form design window in the Workflow Designer.

System components

Workflow Designer

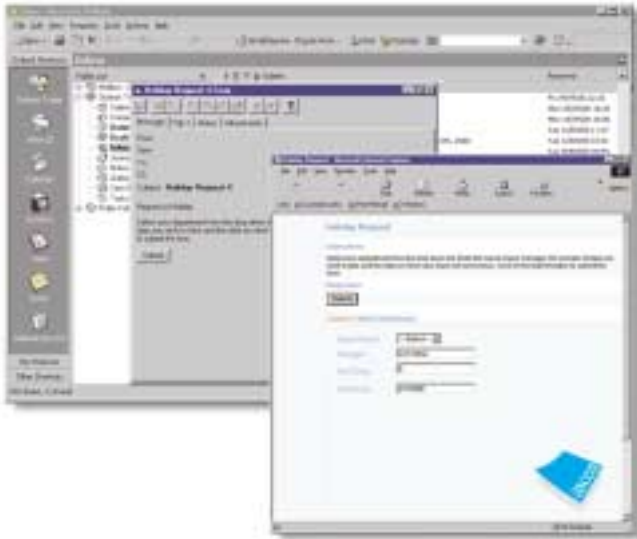
The Workflow Designer is where the person responsible for the process will create the process. They will use the intuitive graphical, pick and place tools, to quickly develop or replicate a process, incorporate the rules and logic necessary within the tasks/steps within the process and test the validity of the process flow from their own desktop PC/laptop prior to deployment.

- Intuitive graphical drag and drop process designer
- Fully featured set of workflow steps including tasks, decisions, splits and joins, spawn sub-processes, transactions for data exchange with other systems, and milestones
- Allow consultation and delegation of tasks
- Embedded workflow server for off-line testing and debugging of processes
- Process validation, checks validity of process route and script syntax
- Script editor/debugger for server side script
- Integrated form designer

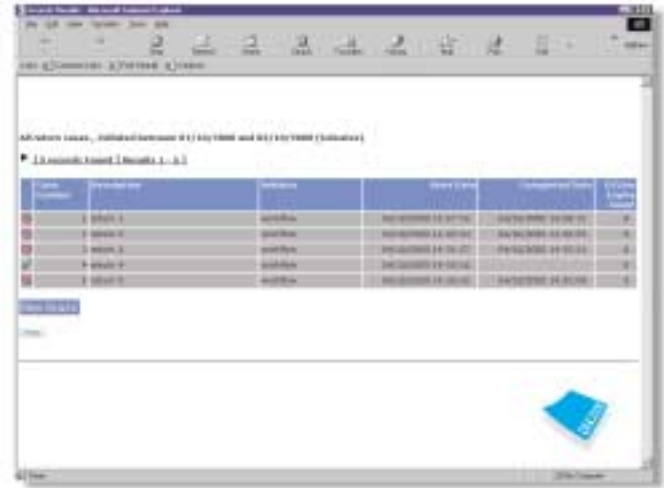
Workflow Server

This Workflow Server is the engine of the workflow tool-set. This uses a hub and spoke method of routing the various tasks around the organisation, with the Server interpreting the rules and logic established in the process flow from the Designer. All steps are audited, date and time stamped, and information is written back to the database for analysis. Any defaults established within the Designer will be applied as necessary. All information is delivered to users or "participants" via their Exchange/Outlook client or web browser via an electronic form.

- The engine of the workflow system
- Interprets the process design, allocates and routes tasks accordingly
- Escalates overdue tasks according to rules set in the process design
- Executes user-defined script in response to server events
- Stores completed tasks for auditing



Users interact with workflow tasks via e-forms delivered to them via a web browser or their mailbox, ensuring a simple, familiar and consistent working environment.



The browser-enabled version of the Workflow Monitor giving instant access to information about all of your business processes.

Workflow E-forms

The e-form is delivered to the participant via their In-box or web browser thus removing any need for additional client-side software applications and making it easy for the user to participate in the process. The e-form can be as simple or complex as the process demands. It can be developed using simple, effective wizard designs via HTML or Visual Basic for Applications for more complex steps that may require integration to other applications and data sources.

- Delivered to the user via the web browser or the In-box (Exchange/Outlook client)
- Displays task instructions and possible responses so users know immediately how to complete the task
- Can display controls data-bound to fields defined in the process
- Provides date and time stamped rich text notes to provide ad-hoc information for participants later in the process
- Accepts attachments of any file type that can be viewed or modified by subsequent participants in the process
- E-form ActiveX control provided for complex e-forms. Visual Basic for Applications form wizard provided for quick and easy form development in the Visual Basic environment. (Any 32 bit development tool can be used)
- Lightweight HTML forms can be designed in the Workflow Designer

Workflow Monitor

This final component allows the administrator or initiator to monitor the progress of the various processes and any sub-processes. Within Monitor, you can manually interact with the process where necessary, such as escalating a task to a specific participant, stopping the process or re-establishing the process for example.

- Web based workflow monitor
- Displays the current status of workflow process instances
- Drill down through the process to details of the status of individual task instances
- Search facility to display only processes or tasks that match the specified criteria such as initiated/completed date/time, initiated/completed by, current status etc
- Allows process administrators to re-establish tasks, allowing controlled deviation from the process, for example re-allocating a task to another user if the original recipient is unavailable
- Allows process administrators to view or copy task instances
- Allows process administrators to terminate processes

Extensibility

For particularly sophisticated processes or rules the functionality of Ascent can be extended because the product is built on the the foundations of COM and ActiveX. Ascent can be extended in many ways to support your most sophisticated processes and components are provided to allow the extension of the product in many areas.

Integration

Many integration points are provided in the Workflow Server to allow its enhancement and customisation. Visual Basic macros can be built in Workflow Designer and executed by the Workflow Server. Visual Basic, or any other COM-aware development tool can also be used to build sophisticated rules and integration points with legacy systems. Customer task allocation mechanisms can be implemented using the plug-in architecture of the Workflow Server.

The workflow web service exposes the power of the workflow engine. Implemented using SOAP (simple object access protocol) it provides access to process definitions, task lists and workflow items, all in XML format. It also provides methods to re-submit completed workflow tasks back to the Workflow Server. This means that Workflow can easily be integrated into corporate intranets, web portals or indeed other applications. It gives Workflow the widest range of participation and allows tasks to be completed within the environment most appropriate for the task.

Scalability

The Workflow product imposes no limits to scalability other than those imposed by Microsoft Exchange itself. Processes can be spread across many servers and the Workflow software can run on a separate server from the Microsoft Exchange software.

Remote use

Remote computing using the Internet or Microsoft Exchange provides the capability to extend Workflow outside the organisation to mobile users, customers and suppliers. This ability to allow customers and suppliers to participate actively in processes and to monitor the progress of those processes can offer significant benefits.

The Internet

The complete Microsoft Exchange client can be hosted in a web browser, allowing remote access via the Internet to a user's mailbox. It is also possible to implement e-forms as HTML pages giving the full power of a workflow solution through a web browser. This provides an alternative mechanism for remote access and allows the deployment of workflow systems in an environment with diverse platforms, with only a web browser required on each client.

Reporting

You can analyse the system using a wide variety of EIS and reporting tools. By auditing the flow of work around the organisation, it is also possible to determine the current state of a job and to obtain metrics about jobs or specific parts of the process.

It allows users to examine the progress of processes, identify the current owners of tasks, and to escalate or re-establish tasks. By analysing bottlenecks or common delays, it helps users take decisions about re-engineering the process or re-deploying staff resources more effectively.



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