

## FILNET CASE STUDY

# District of Columbia's Dept of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs Basic Business License

CLIENT	<p>District of Columbia's Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs</p>
PROJECT	Basic Business License
WEBSITE	http://mblr.dc.gov/
TECHNOLOGY	.NET, J2EE, C#
DURATION	02.2004 - 03.2006

## Overview

In 2003, the District of Columbia City Council passed the *Streamlining Regulation Emergency Act*, an emergency legislation that modified the existing Master Business Licensing and Registration (MBLR)

program by eliminating the need for some DC businesses to register for business licenses. The legislation essentially changed the MBLR program to the Basic Business License (BBL) program. Additionally, the emergency ruling immediately halted all online business transactions on the existing MBLR website—a site that Filnet was instrumental in developing. As a result, Filnet and other partners were brought back to redevelop the newly static BBL site and corresponding backend applications. Using its proven development processes, Filnet surveyed DCRA customer's needs, and customer service representatives' tasks and duties before the commencement of the site restructuring.

## Challenge

The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) needed an online presence to allow business owners to renew their business licenses as required by DC regulations. Conjointly, the agency required a new intranet to help its customer service representatives (CSRs) quickly and easily access, add and modify data from forms received in the mail from businesses wishing to register their enterprise or renew appropriate business licenses. Just after the emergency legislation passed, the old MBLR functionality was halted and a new, static BBL was launched. The new website would now only allow DC business owners to download appropriate forms that would have to be manually completed and mailed back to DCRA. Otherwise, representatives from DC businesses would have to travel to municipal offices to register or renew licenses in person—often times having to deal with long lines and wait times. Clearly, these options created extra work for both businesses that were restricted from using quick-access transactions over the web as well as BBL reps who witnessed a rise in workflow due to increase volumes of applications received by mail, and in person.

To make matters even more complicated, CSRs had to enter the license renewals and new business registrations information into two separate databases using two separate user interfaces. Moreover, the old MBLR application allowed some data redundancy. As a result, the databases were becoming unnecessarily large and inefficient.

## Solution

Even though Filnet provides front- to back-end web and application development services to government agencies, our role on the BBL project was primarily to create a new and improved graphic user interface for the public Internet site, and a hassle-free DCRA BBL intranet for CSRs. The reconstituted BBL site would guide business customers through the entire renewal process online. The new, dynamic user interface would be more an interactive BBL website for District business customers. Likewise, DCRA reps would find greater ease in using a newly developed intranet.

Prior to the creation of a BBL website and intranet, Filnet surveyed DC business customers' needs and recent legislation that affected the way the BBL program conducted renewals and registrations. In addition, Filnet reviewed DC's existing technical applications, the BBL printed application, and current processes to determine what was needed to develop appropriate user interfaces that would streamline workflow of CSRs; seamlessly direct information from the front end to backend DCRA databases; and jump start the license renewal process of District businesses.

The previous version (i.e., MBLR) used ASP technology. The new BBL, however, adopted a .NET platform for the front end design of the website. Filnet used a three tiered approach to the project. The three tiered system consisted of a J2EE servlet connecting to a .NET web service connecting to Oracle through stored procedures. C# was used for the BBL renewal application. The .Net platform met DCRA standards, guaranteed that project costs stayed within budget and allowed for rapid-development and on-time project completion.

The new BBL user interfaces for the public website and the DCRA intranet developed by Filnet capture complex data and channels information into backend applications. Also back end applications have been updated to eliminate pointless entries and data redundancies. The new BBL streamlines the data entry process by creating user-friendly interfaces for DC businesses and DCRA reps.

## Results

The District of Columbia's government is running more efficiently thanks in part to the new BBL user interfaces. BBL applications have become extremely user friendly and reduced the administrative frustrations of CSRs and long waits at municipal offices typically experienced by District of Columbia businesses seeking to renew licenses. Additionally, commercial organizations can now go online to renew licenses rather going through the multiple tasked processes of downloading forms, manually completing the forms, and then mailing the forms to DCRA; or making time to travel to municipal offices to complete business license transactions. Since the new Internet site allows payment by credit, business transactions increased significantly bringing revenue into the city at a faster pace. Lastly, DC business owners are happier because they are saving time and resources, which can now be directed toward running successful enterprises.