



Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC)

Building innovative services and facilitating compliance with deep insight into customer journeys

Overview

The need

As it prepared to transition to single-page web applications, ARC wanted to facilitate compliance with stringent regulatory reporting requirements and ensure high-quality customer experiences—but how?

The solution

ARC upgraded its IBM® Tealeaf® Customer Behavior Analytics solution, enabling it to use document object model (DOM) capture and replay to monitor customer journeys across its new single-page web applications.

The benefit

Equipped with deep insights into customer pathways, ARC can help users to get maximum value from its next-generation web applications and deliver clear audit trails to satisfy its regulators.

The next generation of single-page web applications enable businesses to deliver customer experiences that are more fluid and responsive than ever before. But when it comes to understanding customer struggles, the new technologies can pose tough technical challenges.

Need for tight security

For Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC)—a US-based travel industry provider of business solutions, travel agency accreditation services, process and financial management tools and services, and data analytics tools—the customer experience was not the only thing at stake as it prepared to transition to new web technologies.

Michael Tarajos, Enterprise Technical Solutions Engineer at Airlines Reporting Corporation, explains: “ARC processes practically every travel transaction in the country. Our customer base includes 9,400 travel agencies that connect to our transactional systems via a web-based portal. This enables us to complete the necessary payment-card processing, billing and fraud detection processes on their behalf.

“Because our industry is heavily regulated, we provide a full account of each customer’s interaction with our sites to our auditors. New online threats are emerging all the time. To defend against them, our security group developed a new web application, which helps our customers adopt compliant browsers to access our systems.”

“In our industry, security is paramount—and to help ensure that our single-page applications are compliant, we needed to audit them quickly,” says Michael Tarajos, Enterprise Technical Solutions Engineer at Airlines Reporting Corporation. “Deploying IBM Tealeaf required minimal changes to our sites, and rapidly delivered the monitoring we need to facilitate compliance.”



Solution components

Software

- IBM® Tealeaf® CX
 - IBM Tealeaf cxImpact
 - IBM Tealeaf cxMobile
 - IBM Tealeaf cxConnect for Data Analysis
 - IBM Tealeaf cxReveal
 - IBM Tealeaf cxView
 - IBM Cognos® Business Intelligence
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He continues: “Our deadline for launching the new compliance test was fast approaching, and to accelerate deployment the application was designed as a single-page site. To achieve our own regulatory compliance objectives, we needed to monitor customer journeys on the new site, and looked for a customer experience management solution that was compatible with the latest advances in client-side page rendering.”

Enhancing the analytics platform

As an experienced user of IBM Tealeaf software, ARC decided to upgrade its IBM Tealeaf Customer Behavior Analytics solution. The latest version provides visibility and actionable insights into its next-generation single-page applications, which are dynamic and client-side processing intensive.

“We first deployed Tealeaf when we transferred our customer-facing systems from the green screen to a web portal, and the results were extremely impressive,” recalls Michael Tarajos. “Almost immediately, we gained the ability to replay customer journeys on our site as if we were sitting right beside them— and our help desk personnel were very happy that they could see what the user truly experienced. In fact, giving our customer helpdesk team access to the IBM Tealeaf solution boosted first-call resolution by 50 percent within just three months.

“Based on our positive experiences with the platform, we were confident that the latest version of the IBM Tealeaf solution would enable us to solve our challenges. After seeing a demonstration of DOM capture in action, we were convinced that the latest version of our IBM Tealeaf solution would offer us the monitoring capabilities we needed, fast.”

Over a single weekend, ARC completed its upgrade to the latest version of the IBM solution with no interruption to business operations.

“We have already built up a great deal of in-house expertise on the IBM Tealeaf platform,” continues Michael Tarajos. “That knowledge— combined with online installation guides from IBM—helped us to move through two successive versions of the software quickly and easily in just two days. Better still, we only had to make a few minor tweaks to our compliance test application to make it compatible with our IBM Tealeaf platform. Thanks to the speed of our deployment, we were able to meet our deadline for deploying the test application with ease.”

Facilitating compliance, improving experiences

With the latest version of IBM Tealeaf at the center of its customer experience management strategy, ARC is strengthening security and facilitating compliance.

“The new DOM technology in the IBM Tealeaf solution enables us to stay ahead of new web technologies for client-side rendering. We’re now back to the Tealeaf replay experience that we have come to rely on.”

— Michael Tarajos, Enterprise Technical Solutions Engineer, Airlines Reporting Corporation

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“One unexpected benefit of using the solution for our test application was the ability to get fine-grained visibility of all of the operating systems and browsers that our customers use. We discovered that approximately 25 percent of our users were running legacy systems that would not be compatible with a key feature of the new testing application—which would effectively have barred a quarter of our customers from entering the site if we had not made a change. Thanks to this timely insight, we were able to ensure each customer receives a consistent experience.”

Delivering proactive support

ARC is now moving from reactive to proactive customer service—helping it to improve the customer experience.

“For the first time, we have the ability to anticipate customer issues and solve them ahead of time,” says Michael Tarajos. “People have joked that we’re clairvoyant because we’ve called to tell them that we’ve fixed an issue before they have even reported it. Our philosophy is: if we’re doing our job right, then we’ll be calling the customer with the solution, and not the other way around.”

Enterprise-wide insights

Based on the initial success of the IBM solution, ARC is already rolling out the new capabilities across the business.

Michael Tarajos comments: “IBM Tealeaf really does sell itself. Because many of our departments only had an aggregate view of customer experience issues before, the ability to see down to the level of individual users and sessions is like night and day. Once we show a member of the team what IBM Tealeaf can do, they want to get going straight away.

“More than 50 people are now using the IBM platform across multiple parts of the business. As well as using replays to solve customer struggles in our helpdesk, our quality assurance team can, for the first time, verify that automated testing tools are working in the expected way. Better still, our marketing teams can see how long customers are spending on each page, find the sticking points, and identify ways to streamline their journeys and improve the experience.”

Driving new revenues

As a next step, ARC plans to use the new solution to develop its latest analytics offering—based on IBM Analytics dashboards—helping to improve the service and drive new revenues.

Michael Tarajos says: “Our data warehouse contains every ticket sold in North America down to the itinerary level, which is a treasure trove of information for organizations in our industry. For example, by purchasing access to our analytics service via our online portal, convention centers can plan their marketing campaigns based on how many people are visiting their city, where they are coming from, and who they are travelling with. Corporate travel offices can also use these insights to determine the cost-effectiveness of their travel policies.

“Previously, we relied on user surveys to measure online experiences and guide our development processes,” explains Michael Tarajos. “However, this approach cannot offer the degree of precision that is possible with the IBM solution. We are now using the IBM Tealeaf solution to perform A/B tests on different versions of our sites. By measuring exactly how long it takes customers to find the information they need, we can use real-world customer behavior to identify the website designs that provide the best experience.”

He concludes: “With IBM Tealeaf, we can identify customer experience issues, track them to the source and resolve them faster than ever—helping us to enhance our services while delivering on our regulatory commitments.”

About Airlines Reporting Corporation

ARC powers the US-based travel industry with premier business solutions, travel agency accreditation services, process and financial management tools and services, and powerful data analytics. In 2014, ARC settled USD89.6 billion worth of carrier ticket transactions for more than 9,400 travel agencies with 13,000 points of sale. By providing world-class business services and products, ARC enables participating agencies and 200 carriers to focus on what’s important—increasing their revenue. Established in 1984, ARC is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia.

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Software Group
Route 100
Somers, NY 10589

Produced in the United States of America
August 2015

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