

A supplier to the military, Teksouth Corp. is building upon its data warehousing, branching out into the commercial sector. As such, it expects to see approximately 8 percent growth this year.



DATA WAREHOUSING AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE — BUILT IN ALABAMA

By Patricia Munson Eye
Photos by Steve Gates



“Where in the world have you guys been?”

Teksouth Corp. says it hears that often. Headquartered in Birmingham and founded in 1983 to build hardware controllers serving the specialty printing industry, the company is now in its fourth metamorphosis — a veteran systems integrator providing data management and business intelligence systems for the Department of Defense (DOD). It works with the U.S. Air Force, Army and Navy, and other DOD sub-entities.

The company has a decade-long relationship with the Air Force, having built the data warehousing Commander’s Resource Integration System (CRIS). Operating out of Ogden, Utah, CRIS is available in real time to more than 14,000 Air Force users around the world, in every time zone, and is in operation 24 hours a day, every day.

“We have built and continue to maintain the Air Force’s most actively used database, which manages all of their operations and maintenance funds, which this year, I think, will top \$47 billion,” says Steve Wilsher, Teksouth chief operating officer.

In September, it would have done 1.1 or 1.2 million ad hoc queries in that Air Force system. Very few business intelligence or warehouse capabilities allow ad hoc queries at all, the company says.

“The system is designed to assist the government in maximizing its ability to use their funds for the greatest needs. And it allows them to look ahead and predict what their costs are going to be in the future,” Wilsher says.

This management capability and architecture was built on Microsoft tools and because of that, the company says that the cost to the government has been significantly less than any other decision-support system that they’ve ever bought, not only in development costs, but in maintenance and sustainment.

Earlier this year, Teksouth announced it was awarded a \$17 million five-year contract by the Air Force to administer CRIS, and most recently, it received a contract for Automated Knowledge Structuring of medical charts for the Air Force medical community.

“This contract is very exciting for us because what it does is allow us to map a program that we hope turns into a reality. It’s a grant that they’ve asked Teksouth to look into,” says Staff Ouderkirk, Teksouth’s president, who is based in Washington, D.C.

Teksouth is to come up with a solution to capture all the data that doctors put on charts, either handwritten or typed into a computer, in a meaningful and accessible way so that the data can be shared. If the program is successful, doctors can see what others are doing for similar diseases and medical problems and diagnosis can be shared.

“Teksouth has six months to produce a concept of operation and then a follow on, which would be

implementation of the various concepts. This is a data warehousing solution for the future decision support capability; consolidating medical information across a great big domain,” Ouderkirk says.

Wilsher says that what it does is germane to multiple industries, including medicine, logistics and the finance community. “It crosses all of those boundaries and it is a very powerful technology for analyzing information to make actionable decisions. This is Teksouth’s first capability like this in business intelligence in medicine,” Wilsher says.

The company also has branched out into several commercial sectors, including banking, manufacturing, and soon, medical.

Ken Craig, CIO and vice president of business development, came to Teksouth a little over two years ago with a wealth of experience in large international corporations.

“One of the reasons I came to Teksouth was because what they had done was very innovative in their application and development of business intelligence and data analytics, and I felt that could really be leveraged into the commercial arena,” Craig says.

Through Craig’s background, the company is now getting a lot of international exposure and requests from international clients, and well as domestic ones, and his enthusiasm for Teksouth is evident.

“I’ve worked internationally and I’ve managed organizations and I’ve been all over the world, and I would put the architects and developers that I’ve found here at Teksouth and in the state of Alabama up against the best that I’ve ever seen anywhere in the world,” Craig says.

Interestingly Teksouth has been profitable in every year of its existence, including its first, according to Wilsher, but “until two years ago, we did absolutely no business in our home state. We had zero sales in Alabama, and now Alabama is producing 10 to 12 percent of our revenues.”

The company reports that fiscal 2008, which ended October 31st, is expected to be it’s most profitable ever, with about 8 percent growth for the year.

Web 2.0 Foray

Recently, a Tampa, Fla.-based Web 2.0 company, Moneynoodle, contacted Teksouth for help in designing and implementing a business intelligence/data warehousing system for its website. Moneynoodle is focused on building bridges between financial institutions and their customers to help repair the damage of the current economic crisis.

The two companies have entered into a strategic relationship and Teksouth will develop forthcoming stand-alone applications aimed at helping consumers make sense of their money in innovative and entertaining ways.

“Our goal is nothing short of having a significant impact on the way consumers perceive their personal finances, as well as on how banks perceive and service their customers. We know that Teksouth has the ability to help us leverage the technology necessary to achieve that mission,” says Peter Lewis, one of Moneynoodle’s principles.

Recruiting and Resumes

Another new target market for Teksouth is the recruiting and resume business, and it hopes to use its technology to completely renovate that business model.

“We’re beginning to put tremendous attention to this. It’s now quite inefficient and hopefully you’ll be seeing the fruits of our labors in that area, in a short amount of time; maybe this year,” Wilsher says.

Teksouth has about 35 employees based in Birmingham and another 105 in 15 program offices in the U.S. and around the world.

Patricia Munson Eye is a regular contributor to Technology Alabama. She lives in Huntsville.



OPPOSITE PAGE: Teksouth’s COO Steve Wilsher (left) and Brad Marshall, director of commercial products and services.

ABOVE, TOP: CIO and Vice President of Business Development Ken Craig brought experience in working with large international corporations to Teksouth.

ABOVE, BOTTOM: Teksouth’s headquarters in Gardendale.