playmobil

PLAYMOBIL France : every day's Christmas with WINDEV & WEBDEV!

Playmobil's French subsidiary uses the WINDEV & WEBDEV IDEs to collect and manage data for its toy distribution business in France.

The company

Playmobil, part of the German company Geobra Branstätter, was established in 1974.
To date over 2 billion characters have been produced and have taken up residence in children's bedrooms the world over.

Project Leader

Catherine Charlesson is the R&D manager.

Plastic is fantastic, WinDev is a dream come true

Playmobil France directly controls the logistics for the merchandise supplied by the German headquarters.

In other countries, the German factory ships directly to the subsidiaries' customers.

The characteristics of the French market (leading subsidiary of the group) mean that a specially adapted computer system was required as a complement to the ERP.

"We decided to internally develop all the modules we needed for running Playmobil France ", states Catherine Charlesson. She adds: *"WinDev was an easy choice thanks to the fact that it covers the whole development lifecycle and is fully open to market standards (office, database and bar code software notably). In terms of the user interface, WinDev is the dream product for any developer. Our colleagues in other countries are jealous of the ergonomy of our applications".*

100 MB of strategic data? Hyper File comes into play!

Sales management (ERP) is organised around xBase files.
"We transparently extract sales information in batches in order to provide Playmobil France with the data it requires. We really do make the most of Hyper File's power given that we use over 100MB of data ", continues Catherine Charlesson.

This data is then shared by the numerous applications used by Playmobil France.

Let's take the Playmobil "product base" as an example: the application handles logistics information such as destinations, palletization, packaging, etc.

Catherine Charlesson details even further. *"All the information required by the marketing department is also covered: packing lists, POS advertising (aisle end display, shelf layout, etc.), prices, photos (box, product, label, etc.), sales blurbs, media plans, certificates of origin, dates of availability, titles for checkout stands, collections or themes."*

WINDEV & WEBDEV after Christmas

Orders at the end of the year are stored in 11 delivery centers all around France.

These centers are managed by several logistics service providers who are in charge of receiving the orders from the factory, stocking them and then delivering them to the clients depending on the delivery date they asked for.

In order to respond to this need a new Extranet application was developed in WEBDEV. This application performs a follow-up on the orders for the delivery centers, the logistics service and the customer service.

This real time follow-up of the merchandise and of the stock allows for the fastest possible alert when there's a problem with reception at the centers or with delivery to the clients.

Another of the necessary applications in Playmobil France: management of the merchandise returns after Christmas.

This involves making appointments for pick-up, following up on schedules and issuing reminders. *"All our mail is personalised and automatically generated via an OLE dialog between the application and Word."*, declares the R&D Director.

In addition to handling returns, the IT department has developed a wide range of other applications that have become essential for Playmobil France, such as order management, a large number of indicators for managers, expense management for sales executives, etc.

Child's play

Catherine Charlesson gives her own opinion on the applications developed by her department: *"WinDev is like Playmobil, once you start, you just can't stop; it really is child's play to use. You can easily debug an easy to read source code, not like when using 4 GL. It is way ahead of the competition! ".*