A major airlines headquartered in the Midwest determined that new technologies could be utilized to improve the accuracy of its Flight Information Display System (FIDS). This type of system provides flight information such as flight departure and arrival times and gate numbers, schedule changes, and other important information on monitors at airports globally. The system is the key to keeping customers and ground personnel informed and helping customers get to the right location on time, in order to catch their flight.

When the first system was introduced in the 80's, it was a boon to helping alleviate problems and confusion, especially at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, is also the biggest and busiest airport in the world. According to the client FIDS Current Manager, the old system "was not Y2K compliant or 100% reliable, because it did not have the capability to access real time information from our mainframe system."

The client decided to redesign and rebuild its FIDS system to provide accurate, real-time information. The plan was to design, develop, and test the system, and implement it at Chicago's O'Hare Airport. Once the new system was proven, it would be rolled out to airports around the world.

The client appointed CTI to be its partner on the project.

From the start of the project, CTI's consultants worked closely with the client personnel and were involved with every aspect of the project: design, development, implementation, testing and rollout.

According to CTI's consultant, "CTI worked with client's team to analyze the present system, pinpoint Y2K compliance and performance problems, and design a new 3-tier architecture-based system. The plan called for an Oracle database that would provide real-time flight data accessed from client's mainframe system. Various development tools and languages were used to extract accurate, real-time flight information from the database and send it to monitors throughout the airport."

The new FIDS intranet was developed using Java applications and applets, and NetDynamics was employed to provide database connectivity.

Two years of planning and development have produced a new real-time application that has been tested and is now fully functional and in use at O'Hare. In addition to giving access vital flight information to client customers, the system provides client's operations staff with the information it needs provide world-class service to its customers, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The new Y2K compliant system is much more reliable than the system it replaced. "It also provides a user-friendly front-end interface to enable the operations staff to quickly and easily modify flight information as needed," says CTI consultant.

Now that the system has proven itself at O'Hare, it will soon be rolled out to other airports around the world, starting with London's Heathrow and San Francisco International Airports.