

Electric Power Utility in New York State



CASE HIGHLIGHTS

Profiled Organization:	A power utility that produces between 35 and 40 percent of the energy requirements for New York State. (The company's internal policies preclude divulging its name in product case studies.)
Challenge:	Important time-sensitive information needed to be captured from diverse sources, then converted to a standard format, and transmitted on an hourly basis, 24 X 7. The previous, manual process wasted employees' time and disrupted their work.
Solution:	The IT staff used the powerful Web-capture and interoperability features of Automation Anywhere to automate and schedule complex task-chaining, report-generation, and information-transmission operations.
Benefits:	Automating manual tasks increased productivity and reduced human errors, resulting in a strong ROI for the power utility company. Wayne Gowen, Senior Developer and Project Manager for the IT Group, reports that Automation Anywhere has paid for itself many times over.

"I recognized the ROI and price point of Automation Anywhere right off the bat. The very reasonable cost of the application, plus the easy learning curve, have already repaid the purchase price two or three times over. There's no question about the ROI, because it formerly took a significant chunk of one or more staff persons' time to capture the required data manually."

- Wayne Gowen, Senior Developer and Project Manager, IT Group

BACKGROUND

This prominent utility company produces 35 to 40 percent of the power requirements for New York State. It owns and operates multiple power-production facilities, and hundreds of miles of transmission lines.

ISSUE

The IT department experienced continual interruptions in its workflow, due to a regulatory requirement to capture data at hourly, daily, and irregular intervals. The process required manually logging into ETA Pro (a power-generation facility monitoring application), capturing four screens, saving the captures as jpeg files, and placing them on a separate system.

SOLUTION

The IT staff used Automation Anywhere's powerful commands to rapidly script the entire data-capture and transfer process. The Automation Anywhere task captures screens that display measurements of thermal and vibration ratings and motor and pump speeds, then converts the output to jpeg files and displays it on scrolling monitors.

The data-collection process now runs free of any human intervention. Automation Anywhere actually improved the company's data-monitoring capabilities: instead of capturing data images manually 2-3 times per day, the Automation Anywhere task captures fresh images every six minutes. Thus the company is now able to monitor the health of its power production systems almost in real time, compared to the former manual process which provided stale, hours-old data.

“A key factor with Automation Anywhere was that it gave me lots of options. I could use the Web recorder to do data capture, so I didn’t have to worry about mice locations or keystrokes. Also, I could automate a script by recording keyboard and mouse actions, then I could manually edit the script and type in commands. Or I could add or remove commands using the drag-and-drop Automation Anywhere menu choices. So I could bounce between the tools.

The other applications I tried all had limitations. For example, they wouldn’t let me start a Web browser, do Web captures and save them, stop that process, use the keyboard, and open Snagit to take screenshots and convert them to jpeg. With the other tools, I couldn’t mix all the functionalities, but Automation Anywhere allows me to use all three. And it’s quite simple – it doesn’t take years of programming experience, or months of learning Visual Basic scripting. I find Automation Anywhere very powerful to use. It’s definitely one of the best things I’ve bought in awhile.”

- Wayne Gowen, Senior Developer and Project Manager, IT Group



The IT staff now uses Automation Anywhere to automate many other redundant, day-to-day chores. For example:

- Automate the capture of internal and external website data at scheduled intervals.
- Automate opening files, extracting data, placing it in an application, and converting and saving it.

BENEFITS

Automation Anywhere eliminated the time it took IT staff to perform tedious, repetitive tasks “by hand.”

Another example: a procedure required that staff log in to an application manually, display a specific intranet web page, open a report, change its orientation from portrait to landscape mode, and print the report. A simple process, yet the task needed to be performed five minutes after the hour, 24/7, and it took approximately 15 minutes. The continual interruptions seriously impacted the staff’s productivity.

Also, reports were occasionally late – instead of being time-stamped 1:05, 2:05, 3:05, etc., they were labeled 1:20, 1:40, resulting in complaints that they didn’t meet the regulatory requirements.

One of the company’s developers estimated that it would take 25 to 30 hours to write the code to automate the process. Yet Senior Developer Wayne Gowen needed only 20 minutes to create a script with Automation Anywhere. Gowen reports: “With Automation Anywhere, I was able to export the script to an .exe, place the .exe on a PC, remove the keyboard, mouse, and monitor, and run it through Windows Scheduler at five minutes past every hour. That system has been running now for about a year.”

Automation Anywhere continues to help this major power production company save time and improve productivity. In the group where Senior Developer Wayne Gowen works, Automation Anywhere now performs at least a dozen tasks in a high-pressure production environment.

“If I could describe Automation Anywhere in three words, they would be powerful, simple, and very diverse. I can easily script tasks using the Web recorder and drag-and-drop commands, and then tweak the script with the built-in editor.

For any company thinking of hiring programmers to automate their complex processes, I would recommend that they seriously consider Automation Anywhere as an alternative.”

Wayne Gowen, Senior Developer and Project Manager, IT Group

If you found this case study useful, we invite you to discover how Automation Anywhere can give your business an edge – visit www.AutomationAnywhere.com

PRODUCT INFORMATION: AUTOMATION ANYWHERE

Automation Anywhere is an intelligent automation software for business & IT tasks. No programming required. Enterprise license includes state of the art drag and drop automation, remote deployment, Visualizer, Workflow designer, image recognition and many more features. Free trial available. Read more about this product at <http://www.AutomationAnywhere.com> or call our sales hotline +1-888-484-3535.