

In October 1989 the first transactions started to flow through the newly formed ATM sharing network implemented as a joint project between Ireland's four principal banks.



## Ulster Bank

Since that day the network has gone from strength to strength, with Ulster Bank's ATM population now totaling some 400 machines capable of dispensing cash in dual currencies not only to the banks' own customers but also to holders of plastic cards badged with LINK, VISA, MasterCard and Cirrus as well as cards issued by the MINT partners.

The ATM network now forms a vital part of the retail banking infrastructure of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. As one of the four banks that form the backbone of this network, Ulster Bank plays a crucial role in serving this demand.

Ulster Bank is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc and, as with the other member banks, the sharing network was Ulster Bank's first experience of Tandem computers and the Base24 EFT application.



Although now an organisation with considerable experience in the art of implementing and supporting high availability systems, Ulster Bank are always striving to improve and enhance the quality of their systems.

Central to this effort is using an effective toolset in their day-to-day operations. Recognising that their current tools were falling short of the requirements of newer projects with aggressive timescales, Ulster Bank turned to Ascertain as a supplier who could update their toolset and fill these gaps.

## Relate

The first of Ascertain's products selected and implemented by Ulster Bank was Relate.

Historically, Tandem users have suffered from a 'missing link' when it came to maintaining and comparing Enscribe database files, creating numerous problems including:

- Staff wasting time writing manual, one-off conversion programs to implement database changes, such as those required by new application versions

- Lack of control over how data changes are migrated into production, leaving operations staff keying data manually into a production database
- Comparison tools that still leave staff checking test results and before-and-after database changes by hand

For users like Ulster Bank, whose critical systems are based on applications that make extensive use of Enscribe files, these problems escalate from simply being a nuisance, to becoming a significant production issue. Prior to the availability of Relate, the only answer had been a mismatched collection of custom programs and utilities such as Enable, Enform, DB-ACCESS and Compare.

### Seeing Real Benefits

Relate gave Ulster Bank, who had previously used Enform, a single product that provided both the intelligent file manipulation and advanced comparison facilities they had been lacking with their previous tools. A significant factor in the choice of Relate was its unique and straightforward handling of complex database record structures frequently used in real applications such as BASE24.

The solution provided to Ulster Bank by Ascert's Relate product not only reduces a significant amount of manual effort in the

implementation and testing of new application releases, it also provides an essential tool in the support of the live application.

Alistair Leitch, Project Leader, quickly saw the benefit from its implementation. Alistair said "Relate has already proved extremely valuable in a number of areas and has more than justified its purchase".

### Further Partnership

Following the successful implementation of Relate, Ulster Bank opted to replace their ageing TransDrive installation with Ascert's VersaTest product.

Ascert and Ulster Bank continue to work together to meet future testing requirements in a constantly changing and challenging world, meeting new business challenges like EMV Chip card implementation.



**business partner**

