

The UCT Methodology

UCT combines unparalleled experience, a proven methodology and powerful custom tools to successfully migrate data

The importance of data migration expertise cannot be overstated

Since application replacements and consolidations are not frequently undertaken, few can claim to have real, comprehensive data migration experience with your system. System vendors are often no different. They may have extensive experience with their own system but they often have little or no experience with anyone else's. UCT data migration experts, however, average 25 years of experience migrating data to and from virtually every insurance application and other kinds of applications, too. We know the techniques that are successful and the ones that aren't. We foresee and resolve issues before they become obvious.

Our toolset puts the business experts into the driver's seat

Instead of collecting data migration requirements in spreadsheets or tables and passing them to programmers for implementation, business experts enter the data migration requirements into DCA, which generates data migration code directly from them. This eliminates some unnecessary dependencies and communication paths that contribute to implementation errors. If an error is encountered, it can be rapidly resolved by the business expert and new code generated and executed usually in minutes.

We evolve the data migration solution using an agile-like methodology

Using our tools, experience and components we've collected from past projects, we rapidly develop a prototype data migration solution. We select a relatively small and simple subset of data and test the solution. Built-in reporting services collect the various messages that are generated so that they can be analyzed and the solution can be perfected. This solution testing and analysis exposes new requirements that the business experts enter into the toolset. The process is repeated using more complex data until no new requirements are exposed and then the test data set is increased in size. UCT innovated this Agile-like methodology in 1989 and has been perfecting it ever since.

We reuse whatever we can and never reinvent the wheel

The source and target systems that are already in your production environments are invested with many reusable components, including COBOL copybooks or other record definitions, I/O routines, calculation routines, tables and utilities. UCT's solution saves time and increases accuracy by reusing these components in the data conversion process.

We use whatever platform is most convenient

Our methodology allows the conversion to run on the secure platforms where the source and target systems live. UCT's data conversion methodology does not need to have systems and/or data moved to a server or a newer platform to use our tools. Doing this only complicates the challenge by introducing additional data conversion requirements as well as unnecessary data security issues. Our generated programs will compile and run on virtually any platform.

We create target data in the most usable format

UCT's tools can create data in a variety of formats. These formats include delimited data and XML (for easy uploading into databases), flat files, proprietary file types, legacy file types and all standard transaction formats. Creating transactions and driving them through the target system is an especially effective data migration technique that UCT pioneered. It ensures that all data has referential integrity and creates perfect target-side transaction history.

We focus on the target system

Data conversions occur because the same or similar data needs to be used by the target system. To that end, instead of creating a list of source system elements and attempting to find their place in the target system, the UCT solution focuses on the target system elements and seeks to satisfy them using data from the source system. This mapping results in a one-to-many or a many-to-one relationship between the source and target elements and in some cases data must be altered or translated based on requirements captured in tables or expressed in business rules. In cases where the target system has different features than the source system, it is common for some source system fields to remain unused. This subtle difference in data conversion approach acknowledges that not all data elements in the source system will have a place in the target system and eliminates a great deal of unnecessary analysis. The unused source system fields sometimes signify critical features that are missing from a target system but are often simply unnecessary in the new system and can be archived or discarded.

How It Works

- SMEs enter business rules that map source records to target fields into DCA. This step creates the finished maps. These maps are reusable in other conversion projects and organize and document your conversion. Once completed, they are used to automatically generate conversion code that is ready to be executed.
- The tool verifies the quality of source data formats and conformity to your business rules. When data quality issues are detected or data doesn't conform to the business rules, DCA automatically reports messages that describe the issue. The business expert can add custom rules to look for other issues or anything else of interest.
- DCA Reporting collects the messages and formats them into feature-rich reports. These reports are portable, shareable and user-friendly. Analysis features allow the user to drill down into the reported data to discover trends and root issues.
- The SME fixes errors by altering the business rules in the maps and the process is repeated. The tool and the reduced dependencies and communication paths allow the cycle to complete exceptionally quickly.
- In addition to data migration, UCT's conversion tools also generate the programs to reformat, audit and balance or validate the migrated data.

