

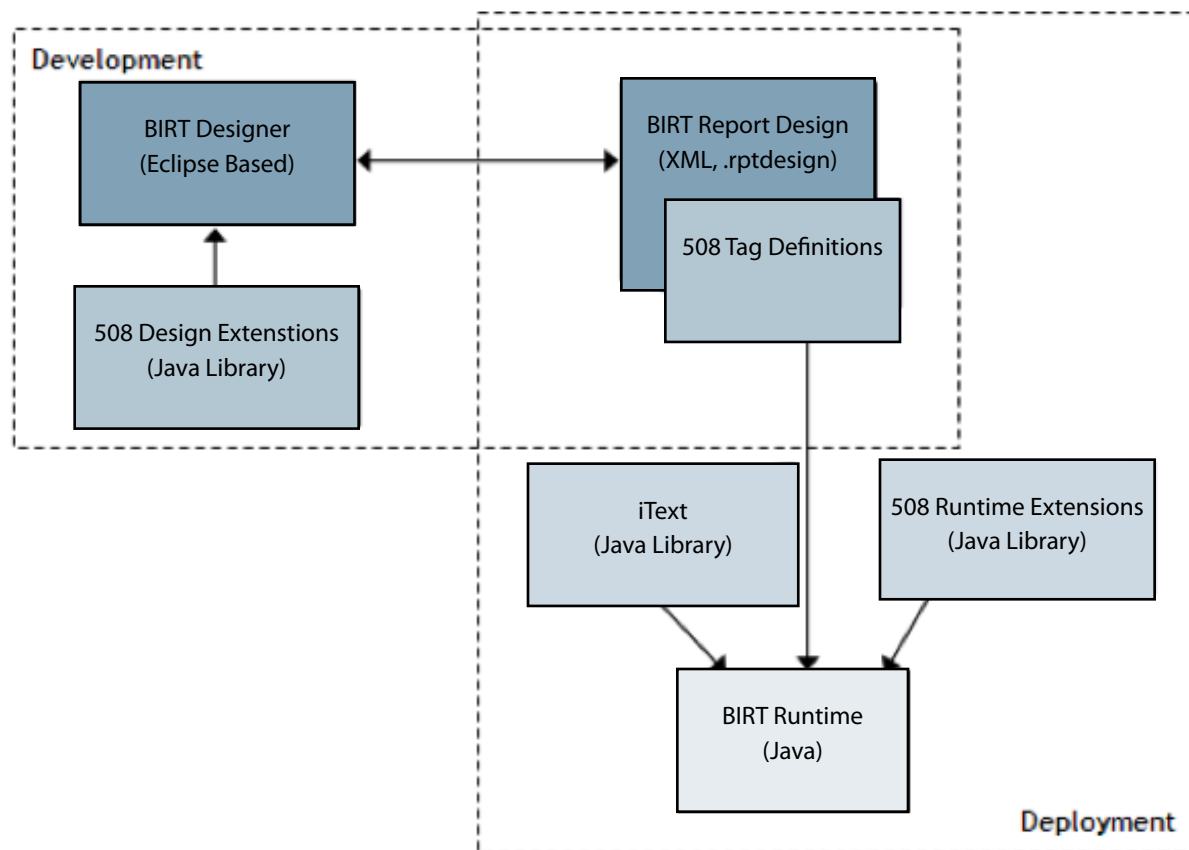
Opening Doors

*How Agile Consulting Makes
Information More Accessible to
Everyone*

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act, introducing Section 508, which now requires all federal agencies to eliminate any barriers in information technology, making available new opportunities for people with disabilities and encouraging the development of technologies to achieve those goals. Federal agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to the access available to everybody else.

But with the introduction of Section 508, a new business challenge emerged. How do you create 508 Compliant PDF reports that are accessible to disabled users? PDF files provide ease of use, flexibility in format and have become the industry standard in both desktop publishing and document security. They are a large part of web-based information, available either on websites themselves or as attached supporting documents for download and use. But despite the format flexibility, there are some unique and difficult challenges associated with these files when document managers attempt to make them accessible. A key requirement when making a PDF document Section 508 compliant is generating the proper tree structure and tagging so that accessibility software such as JAWS (Windows Screen Reading Software) can read the document clearly and precisely to benefit visually-impaired readers.

Agile Consulting, though, felt that they were up for the challenge. Based out of Woodbridge, NJ, Agile is a leading international software and IT services company that delivers innovative, user-friendly solutions and services for various industries and verticals. With the help of BIRT from Actuate, the company developed and implemented a Section 508 compliant reporting solution for a leading non-profit organization. JAVA library components – including 508 Design Extensions and 508 Runtime Extensions – were developed to support the 508 compliance requirements, with integrated tree structure and tagging. A BIRT Runtime engine was then used to produce the report, which was converted into a PDF using the Open Source PDF conversion software iText. A few thousand Section 508 compliant reports are now generated on a daily basis using this solution, and are made available via a secure website to consumers.



[Figure 10.1: Agile 508 Reporting Solution.]

Other Agile Offerings

Agile's offerings extend beyond Section 508 compliance, though. By getting to know their customers and their businesses, the company brings added value to organizations in a variety of ways, including:

- *Business Intelligence.* Agile offers robust reporting and analytical solutions.
- *Dashboards and Scorecards.* Agile implements dashboards and scorecards that deliver "right time" information across an organization.
- *Business Intelligence Competency Center.* Agile has proven and practical roadmaps to enable the adaptation of Business Intelligence across the enterprise, including standardization, process optimization and advanced visualization capabilities.

How Does BIRT Fit In?

Agile Consulting utilized BIRT technology to develop and create the Section 508 Compliant PDF reports with the

appropriate document tree structure and tagging. Agile's BIRT experts had to customize the BIRT report engine to achieve the appropriate document tree structure and to insert appropriate tags to make the document Section 508 compliant. BIRT was chosen because it was a natural fit for the 508 compliance project, a Java solution. BIRT's inherent integration capabilities with Java were appealing to the project team.

Agile has also developed and deployed other BIRT solutions, including Wireless Actuate Reports. Working for a major financial company, Agile was faced with the challenge of providing critical BIRT reporting information to their field representatives over Blackberry devices. Agile designed and developed a Microsoft .NET application for Blackberry using Actuate's Information Delivery APIs. This wireless application was designed and developed keeping in mind the display area available on a Blackberry to minimize scrolling. The wireless application provides field representatives access to existing Actuate report information with drill-down capabilities for summary and detail reports.

For more information, visit www.agile-consulting.com.