# CRS DATA AND CONNX SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY

Since 1989, CRS Data has worked to connect its customers with powerful, accurate data. Simply put, the company is dedicated to doing data better. CRS Data's innovative suites, robust data, reliable technology and outstanding customer service are why real estate professionals, MLSs, and bankers across the nation turn to CRS Data for their property intelligence.

Industry
Computer Processing and Data Preparation Services

Solution
32 to 64-bit Bridge

Linked Servers

Benefits

♦ Improved functionality of source systems

♦ Time and cost savings

♦ Fast to implement

♦ Data abstraction layer
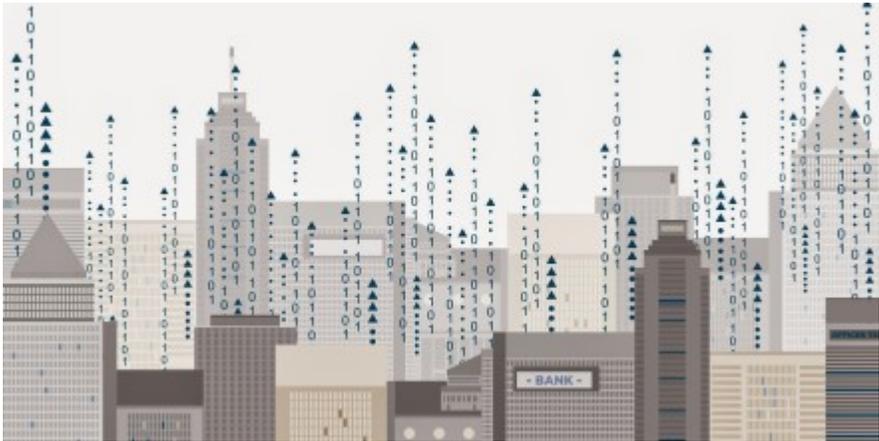
About CRS Data

CRS Data was started in the late 1980's as Courthouse Retrieval System, with the objective of retrieving public records from county government offices to service real estate's leading professionals. Since inception, CRS Data's programs have diversified to respond to the needs of MLSs, investors, lenders, appraisers and bankers, who all rely on the company's intuitive, top-performing solutions to ultimately improve upon their bottom line. From a BBS subscription service, the company has expanded, now offering public records data services to professionals all over the U.S. Today, CRS Data offers property tax data for hundreds of counties across the country.

Part of CRS Data's business involves downloading real estate listings from Multiple Listing Service (MLS) feeds. These feeds use a standard called the Real Estate Transaction System (RETS). RETS feeds are essentially a web service that queries a database. There are a few different options available to programmatically access this data using any number of platforms and languages. Previously CRS Data was using the ODBC driver called ezRETS to connect to the data because it integrated best with SQL server, but a recent server upgrade would cause that client to stop working.

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- **Paul McGowan** │ DB Administrator at CRS Data

The Problem

The Real Estate Transaction Standard (RETS) is a common language spoken by systems that handle real estate information, such as multiple listing services. A common language enables computers to exchange information about real estate transactions without being specially "trained" to understand the information from each. You can think of RETS a Web Service for real estate: a presentation language and protocol for real estate information access.

Similarly, servers that implement RETS, available from a number of different vendors, can talk to clients that also implement RETS. If you're building a real estate solution that needs to access MLS or other real estate data, building it with RETS is the way to get the widest possible customer base. CRS Data queries over 50 RETS servers daily for MLS listings.

Recently CRS decided it was time to retire the old server that handled importing the listings into their dataset. They were using SQL Server 2008R2 32 bit. There exists an ODBC driver called *ezRETS* which was designed to allow a RETS feed to be accessed using SQL commands. CRS leveraged this to create SQL Server Linked Servers to each rets feed. This way, only minimal dependencies existed between the original data and the CRS copy. The server responsible for performing these data imports was an aging machine that was only still around because the ezRETS driver only came in the 32 bit flavor. In order to natively access a 32 bit ODBC driver, SQL Server must be the 32 bit version.

A solution was required that would allow a 64 bit program to access a 32 bit DSN. This is where CONNX comes in. CRS set up a demo with CONNX to see if it would work without significantly having to rewrite and test the underlying procedures. The main issue with the ODBC driver is that it lacks much of the metadata that a traditional ODBC connection would have. After a little configuration and tweaking, they had a working bridge from a 32 bit ODBC connection to the 64 bit SQL Server. By dropping the CONNX Enterprise Server in the middle of the process, it saved

CRS a tremendous amount of time because they did not have to significantly change their processes or create their own in-house RETS client.

The Solution

For modern databases such as SQL Server and Oracle, there are already native 64 bit drivers, but for less common systems, or databases where the manufacturer has no plans to create a 64 bit driver, the bridge is a needed component in allowing your systems infrastructure to upgrade, while maintaining access to legacy production data sources. For companies that already have a 32 bit driver to a given data source, the CONNX 64 bit Data Bridge instantly extends it to a 64 bit ODBC Driver, 64 bit OLE DB Provider, and 64 bit .NET Data Provider. For a complete list of our databases, check out our **databases page**.
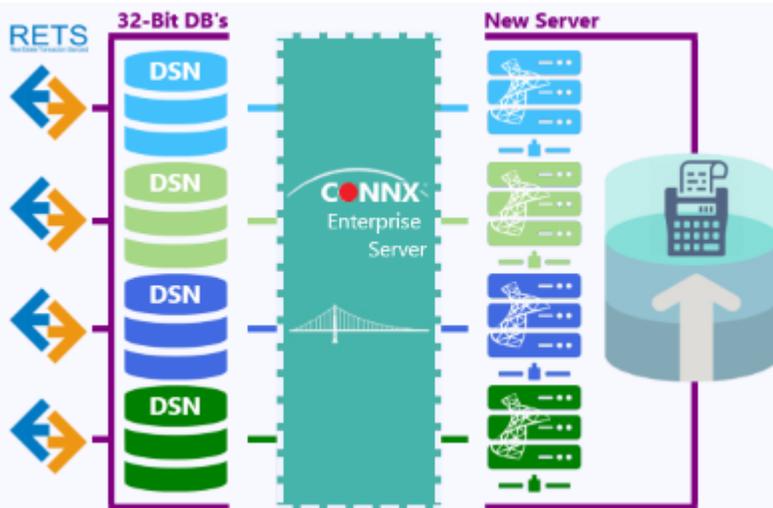
CONNX has a 32 bit Service called the Enterprise Server Service, which is responsible for establishing connections to legacy 32 bit drivers that don't yet have a 64 bit counterpart. The CONNX 32 bit ODBC Driver, OLE DB Provider, .NET Data Provider, and JDBC Server can communicate to the 32 bit Service running under the WOW64 subsystem, and provide seamless access to 32 bit data sources natively from 64 bit applications. See above image.

The Results

CONNX allowed CRS Data to move to SQL Server 2014 and still use old 32-bit RETS ODBC Drivers. Without the CONNX 32 to 64 Bridge CRS could either keep running an old version SQL Server or write their own 64 bit RETS client. CONNX allowed CRS to maintain their existing configuration without having to invest any more time than necessary for the upgrade.

Paul McGowan, a Database Administrator at CRS said, **"***I would recommend CONNX to any company that needs to bridge a 32-bit data source to a 64-bit client. The CONNX 32 to 64-bit bridge allowed us to continue to use the 32-bit ezRETS ODBC driver with our 64-bit SQL Server Linked Server without much hassle.***"**

"The new setup has been running without issue, relatively untouched since the initial setup. To me, not having to fiddle with something every day makes it worth the expense."