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“Even when it is handling large amounts of data, the SAS system stays extremely flexible and allows us to make new templates for new types of report that might be required in a matter of hours, rather than days”

Stefan Thys

ICT Projects Co-ordinator, Tibotec-Virco

The Power to Know™

Tibotec-Virco SAS for reporting on the HIV cocktail recipe

Tibotec-Virco is a multinational biotechnology company with headquarters in Belgium and operating subsidiaries in the United States and Ireland. It was formed in March 2001 through the merger of Tibotec and Virco, who pooled their expertise in drug discovery, pharmacogenomics and molecular diagnostics. Tibotec-Virco applies the latest techniques in molecular biology, pharmacogenomics, drug discovery and development, and artificial intelligence to develop novel drugs and individualised disease management products, services and technologies for HIV/AIDS with the ultimate aim of enhancing and extending peoples' lives.

Managing enormous amounts of data

Tibotec-Virco has made huge and rapid strides forward in the discovery and development of its own drugs to combat HIV, with several drugs producing excellent results in clinical trials. However, bringing any new pharmaceutical product on to the market clearly needs adequate control, and can be a slow process.

One of the major problems in the treatment of HIV with drugs is the ability of the virus to develop resistance to the drug. This is a complex area - there are over 250 known mutations of the virus. A key element in the development of these drugs is therefore the collecting and reporting of data on resistance to HIV drugs, collected either through the results of laboratory tests, or produced through complex statistical research using previous test results. Tibotec-Virco has signed a number of agreements with major pharmaceutical companies to provide them with HIV drug resistance testing and other analytical services.

In its diagnostic services department, Tibotec-Virco tests the resistance of each patient's specific HIV type to the drugs that are currently in development or available on the market. These tests result in a report that includes drawings, matrices and color-coding in

order to achieve optimal information transfer. This allows doctors to determine for each patient the optimal combination of anti-HIV drugs.

The systems used to manage these large amounts of data from different sources had grown organically with the research processes. They had their origins in small-scale research projects, and while they were ideally suited to these initial aims, the need for further improvements surfaced more recently.

Stefan Thys, ICT Projects Co-ordinator for Tibotec-Virco explains: “The lab pioneers had built an excellent system to provide support for the testing they were doing. However, as the scale and complexity of our research and the number of data sources have grown tremendously, new needs arose, especially for a more solid architecture, easier maintenance and greater flexibility. We particularly aimed at improving the scalability, and at reducing maintenance and testing time considerably.”

A solid reporting architecture, great flexibility

Tibotec-Virco joined forces with SPSInfoquest to develop the reporting project with SAS software. The project sought to provide a solid architecture for reporting results to the people who need them in a flexible, yet reliable way. The system allows for test results to be

The challenge

DTibotec-Virco sought a new system to house, process, and report all its information relating to HIV drug resistance testing. In particular, it was looking for a way of providing the information in a sophisticated visual format. This information is made available to doctors to determine for each patient the optimal combination of anti-HIV drugs.

