

American Student Assistance

Slashing total cost of ownership for document management and imaging system

Benefits

- Slashes total cost of ownership for document management system, cutting yearly maintenance cost by two-thirds
- Improves customer service with quick responses to customer inquiries
- Is quick and easy to install and use
- Provides extensibility for future integrations and additional streamlining

Business profile

American Student Assistance

A leading provider of higher education financing products and services

Industry

Financial services

Geographies

Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts

Business Solution

Document management

EMC Documentum products

EMC Documentum ApplicationXtender

Deployment summary

System manages student loan-related documents. 200 users in customer service, legal, and other departments currently access more than 2.5 million objects, with approximately 60,000 new items scanned in each month. Sixteen million more objects will be migrated from the legacy FileNet system.

EMC Documentum partner

Kofax Software, Paragon Systems

Business overview

American Student Assistance (ASA) is the oldest and one of the largest Federal Family Education Loan Program guaranty agencies in the United States. In its role as a national guarantor, ASA offers federal Stafford student loans and Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS). For over 40 years, ASA has helped 2.4 million students pursue their academic dreams by assisting them in successfully completing a program of education financing and repayment.

Challenges

Until recently, ASA scanned all of its student loan applications and related documents (such as W2s, birth certificates, financial statements, legal disclosures, and so on) into an aging FileNet system that required significant maintenance support and was cost-prohibitive to upgrade. While looking for a replacement system to manage these documents, ASA won its largest customer, the state of Missouri, who had been storing its 2.5 million records using Optika software (recently purchased by Stellent). Importing the Optika images into the FileNet system did not make sense if they were going to replace that system, but to keep the customer ASA needed to have a new system up and running within weeks.

EMC Documentum solution

At the recommendation of systems integrator Paragon Systems, who worked with ASA to determine the best software solution and methodology to accomplish the organization's goals, ASA turned to EMC Documentum ApplicationXtender®, a Windows/.NET-optimized solution that allows organizations to securely capture, archive, and access electronically managed documents. "That EMC Documentum ApplicationXtender was quick to install was a huge advantage, but the main reasons we chose it were because it lowered our cost of ownership, was easy to use and maintain, and provided vastly improved performance and reliability," said Allen LaPlant, ASA director of information services.

Using Ascent Capture software by Kofax, approximately 50,000 – 75,000 new objects are scanned into the ApplicationXtender system each month. Two hundred ASA employees in legal, customer service, and other departments use the system to access images of student loan-related documents. At any given time, typically 50 – 75 concurrent users access the system.

Quick and easy installation and adoption

With help from Paragon Systems, ASA installed ApplicationXtender and migrated all 2.5 million Optika files for the state of Missouri. ASA users took to the new system quickly and easily thanks to its very intuitive user interface and fast performance. Because the ApplicationXtender implementation went so smoothly and yielded benefits so quickly, ASA decided to go ahead and replace its entire legacy FileNet system with ApplicationXtender. Within only two weeks, a separate ApplicationXtender system was implemented to handle all ASA's other customers. Today all incoming documents are scanned into the new system.

ASA was concerned that the proprietary nature and complexity of the FileNet system would greatly hinder the conversion of files to the ApplicationXtender system. However, using homegrown technology and ApplicationXtender tools, Paragon Systems was able to successfully begin converting the FileNet files. All 16 million files are expected to be converted within two months, far exceeding ASA's expectations.

Total cost of ownership slashed

"We used to have to contact FileNet every time we needed to change anything related to the system," said LaPlant. For instance, every time ASA upgraded its servers, which it does on average every three years, the organization had to call in FileNet consultants to move the software from one server to another. Because of the openness and ease of deployment of the ApplicationXtender system, ASA expects its upgrades to be a fraction of previous upgrade costs. In addition, according to LaPlant, "Moving to EMC Documentum ApplicationXtender has reduced our yearly maintenance expenses by two-thirds."



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Allen LaPlant, Director Information Services

The new system is also much more reliable. "We have not had a single hiccup since we installed EMC Documentum ApplicationXtender months ago," added LaPlant.

Ten times faster access to information improves call center response time

The ApplicationXtender system offers dramatically improved performance compared to the old FileNet system. "With our old system, when users queried for a particular document image, they had to wait 10 – 20 seconds," explained LaPlant. "With ApplicationXtender, we can call up the image in just a second or two." Faster access to information translates to faster response time to customer inquiries. For example, if a student calls ASA and says, 'I paid off my loan last month but I continue to be billed,' the ASA call center representative can quickly pull up all the appropriate documentation needed to resolve the matter.

Extensibility for the future

According to LaPlant, another reason ASA purchased ApplicationXtender is because it is an open system that provides the flexibility and extensibility needed for future expansion. For example, ASA is considering integrating its custom student loan guarantee system with its ApplicationXtender system to provide customer service representatives with even easier access to the information a customer might need. The ASA legal department is also looking into using ApplicationXtender to manage corporate legal documents. In addition, by adding ApplicationXtender Web Access, ASA has the option to eventually enable remote scanning of student loan documents into the system, as opposed to scanning at a central location as is done today.

Summary

By replacing its FileNet imaging and document management system with EMC Documentum ApplicationXtender and Kofax Ascent Capture, American Student Assistance gained an important new customer and a better way of electronically capturing, storing, and accessing critical content. ASA not only dramatically reduced its total cost of ownership, reducing yearly maintenance costs by two-thirds, but also improved employee productivity and customer service.



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Customer Profile
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