

The Swedish Prosecution Authority

Showing the way forward for the public sector in Sweden

Benefits

- Simplifies the management of IT systems by uncoupling the repository from applications
- Yields greater operational efficiency and lower systems management costs
- Enables easier to communication with the police, the Prison and Probation Service, and other judicial bodies
- Provides greater access to information

Business overview

The Swedish Prosecution Authority has three national prosecution offices—one for the battle against corruption, one that handles suspected crimes against the police, and one for security cases—in addition to three international prosecution offices.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority has a staff of approximately 1,100 and it handles some 100,000 criminal cases a year. Over 770 people working for the Swedish Prosecution Authority are prosecutors. A prosecutor's three main tasks are to investigate crime, to make decisions about whether to institute proceedings or not, and to appear in court.

Working with the police, the prosecutor investigates crime. Once the crime investigation (preliminary investigation) is complete, the prosecutor decides whether there is sufficient evidence to institute proceedings. If legal proceedings are instituted, there is a trial in a court of law. The task of the prosecutor is to prove that the defendant has committed the crime.

Challenges

The Swedish Prosecution Authority needed a way to manage all of the information associated with an investigation and prosecution.

The organization's innovative thinking in this area comes to a large degree from Mikael Dahlin, senior archivist and head of the documentation unit at the Swedish Prosecution Authority. Previously an archivist at the pharmaceutical company Astra, Dahlin was used to working with demands for commercial efficiency and with strict legal controls on how the information is handled.

When Dahlin joined the Swedish Prosecution Authority, there was already an ongoing e-repository project—but it was specific to a particular application. Dahlin felt that application-specific repositories would not yield the integration benefits that are possible with a central repository. He was also aware that this approach would create migration problems when changing applications and would impede communication between other bodies in the legal system. Dahlin's vision was to uncouple the repository from the applications, and to offer active management of business-critical information.

"When I arrived at the Prosecution Authority in 2005, I inherited the EMC Documentum installation that was being used for specific applications in handling criminal cases. But after a while we decided to separate the e-repository from the applications. Initially, that gave us extra work, but we can now see all the advantages of a single e-repository for all the Prosecution Authority's activities," says Dahlin.

EMC Solution

Today the Swedish Prosecution Authority uses EMC® Documentum® as the basis for a central e-repository that handles information from all the applications used by the Swedish Prosecution Authority. Having a central repository has been a major advantage, considerably simplifying the management of IT systems by comparison to the previous system. This yields greater operational efficiency and lower systems management costs.



Business profile

Swedish Prosecution Authority

The government organization in Sweden dedicated to investigating and prosecuting crime

Industry

Government

Geographies

Three national prosecution offices in Sweden plus three international prosecution offices

Business solution

Case management, document management

EMC products

EMC Documentum content management platform

The Documentum repository delivers other advantages for the Swedish Prosecution Authority's principal activity—handling criminal cases.

“A single case may have many documents, and several of those may be on loan from the police while the prosecutor is handling the case. With a central repository for the Swedish Prosecution Authority, it will be much easier to keep track of them, and thus make the legal system more efficient,” says Dahlin.

The electronic repository is also a prerequisite for the Swedish Prosecution Authority's transition from paper to entirely digital documentation. The decision was made in 1998, and Dahlin believes that paper documents will all be gone within a couple of years.

Other advantages

A central repository that is not tied to a specific application makes it much easier to switch to new systems. Only the information needed for active cases has to be migrated to the new system. The rest is already in the repository and is not affected. This means substantial savings, as phasing out a system and migrating data in the traditional way can amount to 30% of the costs of a new development.

The central repository also makes it easier to communicate with the police, the Prison and Probation Service, and other bodies. This is particularly important, as a prosecutor borrows most of the information about a case and then returns it once the judgment is made or the case dismissed.

The new e-repository will make it technically possible to let citizens see details that the legal system has stored about them. Political and legal questions remain, but it is likely that this capability will be required, especially once the health service and other community institutions make personal information accessible to the individuals concerned.

Summary

Implementing Documentum was an important milestone for the Swedish Prosecution Authority. However, the work to make the handling of information in the legal system more efficient continues. No political decisions have been made, but the idea is to disseminate this thinking at the Swedish Prosecution Authority to the entire legal system, according to Dahlin.

“A repository is not simply a form of storage. It is a central service that handles information as exactly that—information. This is something unique to the repository.”

Mikael Dahlin, Senior Archivist and Head of the Documentation Unit

“Having a shared information model for the entire judicial system will make it easier to capture communication failures between these bodies. The police, the prosecutors, the district courts, and the Prison and Probation Service all use different case terminology. By capturing the knowledge about a case in the repository, we can still build a shared case without forcing these bodies to use the same terminology. That will make it easier to make a good confidentiality assessment, and it will also be technically possible to let individuals see the information,” says Dahlin.



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