



Elision Selects InputAccel® to Help NHS Pensions Agency Go Paperless

As part of an ongoing systems modernisation program, planning began in 2002 to introduce electronic document management (EDM) into the NHS Pensions Agency in Fleetwood, Lancashire. The aim was to improve the service to members of the pension scheme by providing the agency's staff with better access to more comprehensive information.

The Challenge

Initially, the NHS Pension Agency set out to solve several problems. Its access to information was slow since the file store was located 6 miles away in Poulton. There were occasions when files were not received until 48 hours after an initial request had been submitted. The file store contained approximately 2.2 million files on 7 miles of shelving. Searching for missing files was time-consuming and not always successful with some files deemed to be lost altogether. Incomplete files also posed a significant problem as new documents were not always included before a request was submitted to the store. Furthermore, many of the files were over 50 years old and in poor condition. With the file store edging close to capacity and the lease due to expire, the NHS Pensions Agency had to decide if it wanted to extend the lease, seek different premises or consider alternatives.

The Solution

A contract was signed in March 2003 to convert the 2.2 million files to digital images and introduce solutions for handling both incoming mail and additional paperwork. Penserver and Atos Origin (formerly Schlumberger Sema) were already providing services to the agency and Elision were introduced as a specialist in large paper conversion projects. It was decided that the old computer hall at Hesketh House would be converted to a "scanning factory" by Elision, who fitted new lighting, power, air conditioning and high speed data networking. The scanning of the 2.2 million files commenced in June 2003 and was completed in January 2004. During this 8 month period, over 68 million pages were converted into digital images. A "fast track" process was in operation throughout this period so that any files requested by agency staff could be delivered electronically within 24 hours.

Industry Case Study Government

The improved access to information enables the agency to provide a better and more responsive service to the members of the pension plan, and save time and resources in the course of doing so.


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At the peak of the project, over 20,000 files per day were being moved between the file store and Hesketh House. Over 150 local staff members were employed on a 3-shift basis, scanning 500,000 pages per day. The Penser EDM system went live in June 2003. Since then, the 4,000 pieces of mail that the agency receives on a daily basis have been scanned and delivered electronically. Images of all urgent documents are delivered by 10:00 am each day and all other documents by 11:00 am.

Additional paperwork generated by agency staff (called "scan and leave") is scanned on a daily basis by Elision on site and the images are usually available as part of the member's electronic file within 48 hours. There was a substantial investment in IT systems for the project, including a 10 terabyte "storage area network" (SAN). This system holds multiple copies of the images and a second "warm standby" system has also been created to provide further resilience. Substantial investment was made in EMC Captiva[®] InputAccel software and Kodak high performance scanners (i830s). Both EMC Captiva and Kodak provided Elision with outstanding support in order to ensure the project was a success.

The Results

The project saw the establishment of one of the largest scanning operations in the UK, employing local people and revitalising a building that had fallen into disrepair. The introduction of a paperless process into such a large administration involved significant culture change but the benefits that have been realized are significant. Agency staff is now able to instantly access all the information held on a member without having to wait for files to be transported from the file store or a colleague to finish with the file. There are no longer problems with missing files or documents and all documents are available within hours of delivery to the building. The improved access to information enables the agency to provide a better and more responsive service to the members of the pension plan, and save time and resources in the course of doing so.



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