



U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD)

Building an efficient, time-saving FEA-aligned infrastructure for enterprise content

Benefits

- Cuts in half time required for bid and proposal management of large acquisitions and contracts
- Saves hundreds of hours of personnel time, both for agency and companies bidding on contracts
- Reduces impact of contract award disputes
- Facilitates compliance with record-keeping regulations from NARA, DOT, and other government entities

Business overview

Reporting to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Maritime Administration (MARAD) is the government agency mandated with strengthening U.S. maritime transportation systems—including infrastructure, industry, and labor—to meet the economic and security needs of the nation. MARAD programs promote the development and maintenance of an adequate, well-balanced United States merchant marine, sufficient to carry the nation's domestic waterborne commerce and a substantial portion of its waterborne foreign commerce, and capable of service as a naval and military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency. MARAD also seeks to ensure that the United States maintains adequate shipbuilding and repair services, efficient ports, effective intermodal water and land transportation systems, and reserve shipping capacity for use in time of national emergency.

Challenges

To facilitate efforts to transform the federal government to one that is citizen-centered, results-oriented, and market-based, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has developed the Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA), a business-based, common framework for improving key areas, such as budget allocation, information sharing, performance measurement, and electronic government (e-Gov). Even without the FEA initiative, MARAD Chief Information Officer Donna Seymour knew that improving the areas targeted by the FEA Business Reference Model was in the best interest of the agency, as well as those with whom it interacted. The question was how best to maximize the agency's technology investment to align with the FEA, meet the goals of the President's Management Agenda (PMA) to make information more available to the public, and be able to devote more time to making U.S. waters cleaner, safer, and more secure.

Increase efficiency and spend more time furthering agency mission

MARAD knew it needed to increase efficiency and simplify some of its business processes. For instance, selling obsolete ships or spare parts or outsourcing ship-related services involved a complex, time-consuming bid and proposal process that consisted primarily of manual tasks—posting the bid solicitation at www.FedBizOpps.gov (the website for

Business profile

U.S. Maritime Administration

Government agency in charge of strengthening the country's maritime transportation systems

Industry

Government

Geographies

Headquarters in Washington, D.C., with five regional offices and one federal academy

Business solution

Document management, bid and proposal management, contracts management, records management, knowledge management, collaboration

EMC Documentum products

EMC Documentum enterprise content management platform, Web Publisher, Content Intelligent Services, eRoom Enterprise, Records Manager

Deployment summary

Approximately 300 employees use the Documentum system to manage enterprise content. Several hundred employees use eRooms to collaborate on projects. In the future all MARAD employees will use the system; 400,000 archived documents will be scanned; and all enterprise content will be managed and stored according to preset retention schedules

EMC partners

Stanley Associates

federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000); receiving and validating proposals; evaluating and comparing proposals, each with its own unique stipulations and qualifications; writing and awarding the final contract; filing copies in different locations; and so on. These manual tasks created mountains of paper and consumed literally hundreds of hours of personnel time, internally as well as at the companies bidding on the acquisition.

Once a contract was awarded, MARAD staff spent additional days managing the documents resulting from the transaction. Making multiple copies, sending them out to different entities, amending them, sending them out again, and keeping track of different versions was not only time-consuming but error-prone. And if a contract was contested, additional weeks or even months could be spent producing detailed reports to justify the agency's decision. All this time spent working on the bid and proposal process was time that could have been spent on more value-added activities to further the agency's mission.

Facilitate compliance, reduce paper, and retain knowledge

In addition, to more easily comply with recordkeeping regulations issued by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Department of Transportation, and other U.S. government entities, MARAD knew it needed a means of enforcing better records management practices. The agency also needed to reduce paper, not only to be more efficient but because MARAD was moving to a smaller facility that would have much less storage space and could not accommodate the growing rows of file cabinets. Furthermore, close to 70 percent of MARAD's workforce is eligible to retire within the next five years, taking with them a lot of knowledge; this added yet one more reason to move information to a central knowledge base with easy archiving as well as search and retrieval capabilities.

Reduce amount of IT support required

In their efforts to leverage technology to improve business processes, Seymour and her IT staff had to spend weeks of precious time integrating different technology products and working out kinks caused by redundant but not identical content. "We needed to find content management solutions for different areas—document management, record keeping, bid and proposal management, and more—but we didn't want to have to integrate multiple solutions," explains Seymour. "We wanted to reduce our technology footprint, eliminate content redundancy, and reduce the amount of IT support required."

EMC Documentum solution

"As we researched the options, reviewed industry analyst reports, and talked with organizations using different solutions, we realized that the EMC Documentum® enterprise content management platform had so much more to offer than other solutions," says Seymour. "Not only did it have document management and records management but it had publication services, built-in business processes, workflows, a collaboration toolset, and so on—and, to top it off, all these components are already integrated in a common infrastructure and linked to the FEA."

Knowing that having a partner would increase the chance of success for implementing a major system change, Seymour worked to build a relationship with a more technically savvy office in MARAD, the acquisition department. The director of the acquisition department, Iris Cooper, shared Seymour's vision of paperless acquisition. Together they formed a partnership that has provided exponential productivity gains for MARAD.

Establishing a consistent, centralized enterprise content management architecture

In late 2004, MARAD hired EMC Documentum services partner Stanley Associates to help the limited MARAD IT staff develop and implement a consistent, centralized enterprise content management architecture that could meet the agency's many different content management needs now and in the future. According to Jason Kruse, director of enterprise architecture at Stanley Associates, "MARAD is consciously building a foundation, including hardware, applications, security, and so on, for all content management. At the center of this foundation is the EMC Documentum platform. Everything else goes on top of it. Having such an infrastructure is the whole goal of the FEA."

As of late 2005, approximately 300 MARAD employees use the Documentum system to manage enterprise content. In the future all MARAD employees will use the system in some way.



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Donna Seymour, Chief Information Officer

Reducing cycle time for acquisition process by 50 percent

One of the first deliverables built on the new EMC Documentum-based content management foundation was the Virtual Office of Acquisitions (VOA), built in accordance with the supply chain management goals of the FEA business reference model and supporting the PMA for better information availability to the public. This paperless system manages the bid and proposal process from bid solicitation through award notification and contract administration. In addition to providing much greater efficiency, control, and accuracy, the VOA has cut in half the time MARAD spends on the bid and proposal process for major acquisitions. Furthermore, MARAD expects to reach its goal of reducing the entire bid and proposal cycle time an additional 25 percent.

The faster cycle time is a result of automating much of the multi-step bid and proposal process:

- After a bid solicitation is created in MARAD's contract writing system, which is integrated with the Documentum system, workflow automatically deposits the solicitation in the VOA.
 - VOA provides a link to www.FedBizOpps.gov, and allows vendors to submit proposals electronically using online Documentum-based .net forms. (In the future, MARAD plans to replace .net forms with Adobe Intelligent forms.)
 - VOA automatically tags in XML the data contained in the proposals and stores it and the associated proposal documents in the Documentum repository.
 - Using EMC Documentum Web Publisher, a PDF rendition of each submission is then published for the vendor to validate.
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- After validation, MARAD technical and cost evaluation teams use customized reports that help analyze and compare the proposals to the original solicitation and established source selection plan.
 - Team members record their comments in online forms that the team lead consolidates into a final report provided to the selection official, who makes the official selections.
 - Contract documents are created in the contract writing system and automatically stored in the Documentum repository.
 - VOA is used to electronically distribute final contract documents, eliminating the need to copy and mail large documents to multiple organizations, and allowing vendors immediate access to documents.

Saving hundreds of hours in bid and proposal process for both agency and customers

MARAD has used the VOA to award a number of very large contracts, including a \$2 billion contract for ship management services. “Using VOA has saved us hundreds of hours,” says Cooper. “For instance, the last time we solicited bids for a similar type of contract, two dozen employees spent 30 arduous days evaluating proposals. This time, with all the data in electronic form and customized reporting functionality, we were able to complete the evaluation phase in less than two weeks.”

With its Virtual Office of Acquisition, MARAD is expanding e-Gov, in keeping with the FEA initiative. e-Gov leverages Internet-based technology to make it easy for citizens and businesses to interact with the government, save taxpayer dollars, and streamline citizen-to-government communications. In the example just mentioned, approximately 2,000 hours of agency personnel time were freed up for more value-added activities that directly impact citizens. And companies participating in the new acquisition process applaud it because it makes bidding on contracts and acquisitions easier and faster for them too. “The company that won the ship manager contract told us that the new process saved its staff hundreds of hours too,” says Cooper.

After a contract has been officially awarded, all the documents resulting from the transaction are kept in the Documentum repository. Because they are in a secure, central, easily searched location with version control and audit trails, contract administration is now much more efficient as well. For instance, year-end obligations to distribute contract information are facilitated in an organized, documented manner.

Reducing the chance of contract award disputes

Furthermore, the new Documentum-based bid and proposal system minimizes the impact of having an awarded contract contested by the losing vendors or the public. In the past, when an award was disputed, not only could the contract be stalled for months, but weeks of otherwise productive time could be consumed producing thousands of pages of reports to justify the selection decision. Today MARAD staff can produce such reports in minutes as well as supply auditors with requested information electronically rather than having to produce reams of paper. In addition, making contract documents available to the public via the VOA has reduced the number of Freedom of Information Act requests.

Providing an effective collaboration environment

The VOA is dramatically improving information sharing—another business area highlighted by the FEA business reference model—between MARAD and vendors as well as internal communications between contracting specialists, program managers, and MARAD management. To improve collaboration even more, MARAD is replacing shared folders on a Microsoft Exchange server, e-mail, and paper with EMC Documentum eRoom™. eRooms are secure, highly flexible, web-based workspaces for geographically distributed workers to collaborate more efficiently. In addition to sharing processes and version-controlled documents in a secure, central, easily accessible place, MARAD eRoom users use built-in eRoom project management tools, such as group calendars, automatic e-mail notification, and issue and resource tracking to further facilitate collaboration.

MARAD is also reducing redundancy and enforcing consistency by providing users with templates for standard forms, such as a project request form, and customized workflows to route the forms. In addition, because MARAD is using eRoom Enterprise, which provides native integration to the Documentum platform, content links in eRoom folders are automatically synchronized with content in repository folders, regardless of which content server client is actually used.

“The MARAD project teams using EMC Documentum eRoom are so much more productive and efficient than they were before,” says Seymour. “They no longer have to wade through an electronic dumping ground of files or worry about the security of documents on the server, and they’ve eliminated the hassle and confusion resulting from e-mailing documents back and forth and attempting to track and consolidate comments from project participants.”

As of September 2005, the agency had 16 eRooms managing different programs or projects, such as agency certifications and accreditations, guaranteed loans, capital planning and investments, and so on. Eventually, MARAD intends to have the EMC Documentum platform drive all the content for its employee portal. “Ultimately, all our users will have access to all the applications, documents, and communications they need from within the portal,” predicts Seymour. “eRoom will be a major component of every user’s portal workspace.”

Facilitating compliance with recordkeeping regulations

MARAD is in the process of piloting EMC Documentum Records Manager, a complete electronic records retention and management solution that allows organizations to create, safeguard, and access records and cost-effectively archive or destroy them according to system-enforced administrative, regulatory, or legal rules. Once the agency has finished conducting the evaluation of its retention policies, MARAD plans to roll out Records Manager across the agency to enforce compliance with FEA record retention objectives and recordkeeping regulations set by NARA, DOT, and other government entities. Records Manager will be integrated with Microsoft Office, including Microsoft Outlook, to archive e-mails as well as other Office documents.

MARAD is also planning to scan approximately 400,000 archived paper documents into the Documentum repository, to increase the amount of information in the knowledge base it is developing.

Finding new ways to leverage the EMC Documentum platform every day

“The EMC Documentum platform has become our development environment,” says Seymour. “We are finding new ways to use it every day.” For instance, in the Credit Portfolio Management eRoom, MARAD can receive financial statements electronically from obligators (companies receiving loan guarantees), that data can be tagged in XML, as is done now in the VOA application, and used to automatically generate reports that help ensure compliance with loan terms and automatically notify the appropriate people when a loan needs attention. MARAD also plans to take advantage of eRoom to implement OMB Circular A-123 internal controls tracking. New Documentum component-based solutions such as this one can be modified or copied to serve other content management needs at MARAD or at other federal agencies looking to realize the vision of e-Gov.

Summary

With the EMC Documentum content management platform, the Marine Administration is establishing an infrastructure that is truly aligned with the FEA and e-Gov initiatives and complies with recordkeeping regulations. Moreover, this infrastructure can efficiently and effectively manage all of the agency’s enterprise content, from acquisition proposals and contracts to e-mails and Gantt charts, all without requiring additional integration. With each new application, its new enterprise content management foundation is saving MARAD more time and money—and improving the agency’s ability to fulfill its mission.

About Documentum software from EMC

Documentum software from EMC Corporation includes enterprise content management solutions that enable organizations to unite teams, content, and associated business processes. With a single platform, EMC Documentum software enables people to collaboratively create, manage, deliver, and archive the content that drives business operations, from documents and discussions to e-mail, web pages, records, and rich media. For more information, visit www.EMC.com/documentum

About EMC

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Customer Profile

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