

case study



Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Helping Safeguard the Environment

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency implemented DocuWare in the Bureau of Land in order to share information with employees across the state in 13 different locations. The solution has allowed the agency to eliminate multiple archives, improve file integrity and significantly reduce document management and storage costs. Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act is much easier now that requested documents can be distributed on CD.

Created in 1970, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) safeguards the environmental quality of Illinois' land, air and water in order to protect health, welfare, property and quality of life; all while balancing the social and economic needs of the state. The IEPA employs 1,200 people who work from either the headquarters' office in Springfield or in one of nine field offices and three laboratories throughout the state.

Documents

The IEPA, Bureau of Land needed an efficient way to store, access and distribute all kinds of documents including: engineering drawings, permits, technical reports, sample data, compliance documents, photos and inspections.

Work Process

Thousands of documents are submitted to the IEPA each month, primarily so the agency can review permits and perform inspections. Historically, original paper documents and microfilm were physically housed in the headquarters' office. Asking field office employees, from all over the state, to journey 1-4 hours just to review a file was impractical. Furthermore, it required the IEPA to relinquish control of the original documents and ship them back and forth between offices or maintain duplicate copies. Copying large format drawings and engineering documents was costly for the IEPA, who was forced to pass the cost on to private industry.

The Bureau of Land's three record rooms contained 1.5 linear miles of paper files in addition to copious amounts of microfilmed records. Maintaining such a large volume of records ate up staff resources, lengthened record retrieval time, and contributed to deteriorating file integrity from copying and shipping records. Meeting the Freedom of Information Act and providing communities, legal firms, environmental

consultants and concerned citizens with requested information was also a daunting task. The agency could receive 500 requests for a 1000 page file forcing them to devote significant time and resources in meeting these requests.

Solution

Authorized DocuWare Partner, COM Microfilm, installed the DocuWare solution. Today, the solution has expanded from Bureau of Land large format drawings and photographs to include inspection photos, technical reports and other documents. The Bureau of Water has also come on board and is focused on digitizing engineering drawings and permit documentation. In addition, the Bureau of Air is expected to begin document imaging in the coming months.

The Bureau of Land purchased a Contex color large format scanner so engineering drawings are the only document type scanned in-house. All other documents are reviewed and prepped for off-site scanning by the records staff by placing a break sheet, containing index data, between each document. Other documents utilize barcode index forms to help automate the indexing process. The digitized information is returned to the IEPA on CD, where quality control measures confirm the integrity of the indexing and image before moving the data into a live electronic file cabinet and sending the scanning vendor an acknowledgement e-mail approving the



The Task

- Eliminate duplicate archives
- Maintain document integrity
- Central file access for 13 remote offices
- Control costs and storage needs
- Comply with the Freedom of Information Act

Appointed Modules

- DocuWare
- ACTIVE IMPORT
- CDMAKER
- INTERNET-SERVER
- RECOGNITION

The Benefits

- One central document pool simplified document management
- File integrity and employee productivity increased
- Significantly reduced document management and storage costs
- Compliance with Freedom of Information Act
- Easy access to information contributes to better public health



scan batch. Once this approval is received, archival microfilm is then produced and the paper shredded. Today, the Bureau of Land and Water combined, have digitized 575,000 documents and drawings equaling over 9.2 million images.

"We are able to index our own documents without performing the entire scanning process in-house. Because we index our own information, our index data is extremely accurate and we don't have to rely on an outside entity that isn't familiar with our business processes," said Tom Reuter, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Land Records Manager.

The Benefits in Detail

User Benefits

Storing documents electronically has had a profound effect on IEPA employees across the state; information needed to perform basic job functions is now readily available online. Documents are no longer shipped between offices, the hassle and time spent to maintain duplicate files in multiple locations has been eliminated, both of which have accounted for increased employee productivity.

Departmental Benefits

With more than 140,000 photos currently archived and an additional 25,000 new photos added each year, the Bureau of Land is also using DocuWare to index and store inspection photos. Now that these images are easily accessible, they provide a visual history of each site, and are a valuable tool for enforcement activities or when evaluating the ecological impact over time.

Bureau Benefits

At the organizational level, one of the biggest benefits of implementing DocuWare is the labor savings that ripple out to each office across the state when the Bureau does a file action correction. With DocuWare, the correction or addition is made in one place, the electronic filing cabinet.

File integrity is no longer an issue. Prior to DocuWare, the high number of reviews, coupled with shipping files between offices and disassembling the documents and files, caused file completeness to degrade and pages to go missing. After the move to imaging, lost pages and degenerating file integrity are a thing of the past, reducing errors, increasing productivity and improving information access by the public.

Today, the Bureau is better able to meet Freedom of Information Act requests for information. Instead of asking people to drive to the office, or hiring copy contractors to copy huge files, the staff simply makes a CD containing PDFs of the desired documents and mail one small package.

"DocuWare has changed many people's jobs for the better. It has impacted everyone who works here, as well as those in private industry that work with us. Prior to our DocuWare implementation, people frequently drove to our office from Chicago just to review a file. Today, in many instances, we place a disk of information in the mail. We also have public document repositories available online – all thanks to DocuWare," said Reuter.

Today, DocuWare provides universal access to information for everyone in the IEPA. The system is used 7.5 hours a day and generates an average of two hits per minute.

Abnormally long retention periods of 50 years to permanent retention, have caused the IEPA to dedicate significant resources and space for the storage of paper documents and microfilm. Many documents in the IEPA's archive are 30+ years old. Implementing DocuWare has curbed the organization's appetite for paper file storage space while simultaneously providing users with a cost effective, easy-to-use way to access information. Moving forward, the IEPA will no longer be solely dependent on microfilm, a format unpopular with the staff, to control its paper file volume and maintain older documents.

DocuWare plays an important role in helping the IEPA meet its mission of safeguarding the environmental quality of Illinois' land, air and water in order to protect health, the environment and quality of life for the people of Illinois.

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Tom Reuter,
Bureau of Land Records Manager,
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency



For more information
please visit our website
at www.docuware.com