



# THE COMPUTERWORLD HONORS PROGRAM

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## CASE STUDY

LOCATION:  
*Saint Paul, Minnesota, United States*

YEAR:  
*2006*

STATUS:  
*Laureate*

CATEGORY:  
*Government and Non-Profit Organizations*

NOMINATING COMPANY:  
*FileNet Corporation*

### ORGANIZATION:

Minnesota Department of Human Services

### PROJECT NAME:

Electronic Document Management System

### Summary

With an upcoming facilities consolidation spurring the agency to shed 50% of its stored paper and growing need to adapt old citizen/customer-service models, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) looked for an enterprise wide document-management solution that would be flexible, comprehensive and quickly implementable. It found one—and completed its implementation reaching its goal on a very short time frame, within a tight budget in a way that the agency could “walk the talk” in its values by promoting opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

In short, the exceptional qualities of this enterprise-wide document management solution—called Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) Express included:

Health care program/document management policy

- comprehensive implementation of a complex technology;
- “best practices” in project methodology and state and federal records management standards;
- true business process re-engineering that extended into daily workflow practices and provides better service;
- quick roll-out without breaking the bank;
- pairing with complementary technology – such as the department’s concomitant move to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) – especially useful in the state’s major, publicly funded health care operations;

Facilities management

- a roughly 50% reduction in the agency’s need for document storage space – a significant accomplishment since roughly 20% of the space the agency uses has been devoted to document storage;
- elimination of the need for an extra, 9th story of the agency’s new health care building;
- the ability to design a green building with under-floor air distribution since poured concrete-



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floors were not needed to support high volume paper storage;

Values-based resourcing

- hiring individuals with disabilities to provide paper-to-EDMS conversion resourcing resulting in win-win for the agency and for the people it serves and the permanent addition of critical skill sets to Minnesota State Operated Community Services that finds and supports employment for people with disabilities.

### Introductory Overview

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### Benefits

#### #1 Better Space

The department's new building was constructed eight stories high instead of the nine stories that would have been necessary to accommodate the previous volume of file storage. The annual cost savings for space alone is approximately \$2 million. Some of those savings were used to make the office space more flexible and productive. In addition, the building was designed to take advantage of the latest in environmental technologies, including in-floor wiring and HVAC systems because it was built without the poured concrete floors necessary for high volume records storage. As a result, the building has been cited as one of the most environmentally, ergonomically and aesthetically advanced in the region.

#### #2 Better Processes

Each EDMS solution was deployed in a way that streamlines the business process in the affected divisions. As with all conversion efforts, each business unit had to commit some extra effort to get its documents ready for conversion and then learn the technology. But every business unit has been very happy with the result and would not go back to the "old" way of doing things. The solution provides them the ability to streamline work processes by using electronic document management and workflow and focus on tasks that directly benefit the department's clients. It also grants the business units access to complete and immediate information on clients immediately, reducing the need for referrals to other staff and delayed responses.

#### #3 Better Adaptability

The department is constantly responding to legislation to add or modify programs. EDMS allows the department to quickly modify a business process or reassign staff to a different area or task, simply by changing a workflow routing map or adding a work queue or changing user security settings. And documents can be reused in new and unplanned ways because they are associated with a variety of metadata fields. In addition, the department can quickly deploy a new program area by reusing existing EDMS tools, like document capture, indexing and routing. And training is easier because the solution has a consistent and intuitive user interface. So new staff can learn it quickly and existing staff can transfer what they learned in one area to another.

#### #4 Better Compliance

The move to electronic records has made it easier for the affected units to comply with HIPAA,



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data privacy statutes and records management best practices.

### The Importance of Technology

According to AIIM, document management (or Enterprise Content Management) is defined as: the technologies used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver content and documents related to organizational processes. Document or content management projects have a notoriously high “failure” rate. Causes of failure can be numerous. Three of the most common causes are: failure to implement the system based on detailed understanding of business requirements, failure to incorporate records management fundamentals, and failure to incorporate project management fundamentals. These potential project risks were mitigated by the project approach described above.

Another common cause of failure is related to the technology. According to James Watson, President of Doculabs, integration issues drive product selection criteria for EDMS. Often, it is difficult to find a combination of components that have a proven track record of working well together. Document management system components add many layers of technology to the existing architecture. They are difficult to implement and troubleshoot because there are many potential sources of technical issues. Therefore, the EDMS solution was built as a “best of breed” solution that deliberately included leading solution providers that had proven integration success. In addition, each component was reviewed to ensure that it would integrate easily into the underlying IT architecture already in place in the department.

The EDMS technologies used were FileNet’s Panagon product suite, including Capture, Image Services, Content Services, Web Services, and eProcess (workflow). It also incorporated document capture via Captaris RightFax and Kodak scanners.

This solution was comprehensive in order to allow business units the maximum flexibility as to which functions they utilized. Some used simple document imaging, while others used complex solutions that included automated archiving of faxes in their electronic form and automated import of documents in their native format, complete with full text indexing.

### Originality

The real “solution” however, was not found in the technology, but in the project team. The project team was made up of current employees that were ready for a new challenge. A “volunteer” team of business analysts gathered business requirements in exchange for training on business process modeling. As a result, DHS has adopted business process modeling as an enterprise-wide discipline used to streamline divisions and processes.

A critical resource was the backfile conversion area crew, composed of teams from several of the department’s day rehabilitation centers. These teams perform the repetitive manual tasks associated with backfile conversion, including document prep, batch creation and scanning. This has proven to be very successful, as the teams are highly dedicated and very competitively priced. And it provides the individual workers with an excellent employment opportunity. This project offers them the opportunity to learn valuable office skills, work in an office environment, earn a consistent and competitive wage and improve their self-esteem. The Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities references this project in its materials that promote using individuals with developmental disabilities to perform document imaging work.

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Another unique feature of the project was the fast track implementation. Each team member was capable of juggling multiple business units at various stages of implementation. Efficient communication processes were quickly implemented (using EDMS tools) in order to ensure coordination of effort and reduce delays and rework.

### Success

The EDMS solution currently contains 35 “document classes.” A document class refers to a record series or functional grouping of documents that use a given set of metadata fields and have common security requirements. The EDMS solution currently supports about 800 users.

All record series defined within the initial scope of the EDMS Express project have been converted. To date, the backfile conversion area crew has converted more than four million pages. And the business areas have been completely satisfied with the high quality of the images and the accuracy of the work.

The EDMS project has directly led to other department-wide initiatives. All of these initiatives improve the department’s productivity and compliance with information management mandates.

#### Records Management

In order to expedite the EDMS Express project, the department needed to purge as many unnecessary documents as possible. In support of this “Slim Down” effort, the department contracted with the State Archives staff within the Minnesota Historical Society to create or update records retention schedules for affected business units. These retention schedules were drafted, reviewed and approved in an expedited fashion so that business units could purge as many documents as possible before they moved or began their conversion to electronic document management. This project is an ongoing effort at DHS. Now that paper records are largely under control, the project focus has shifted to providing guidance on managing electronic records, such as email. This project will also be “operationalized” within a full time records management position that will provide ongoing guidance regarding records management policies and best practices at DHS.

#### Business Process Modeling

In order to quickly compile a comprehensive understanding of the business requirements in each business unit affected by EDMS Express, the Projects Management Office collected a group of “volunteers” from various business units and trained them on Business Process Modeling. This tool captures the existing business process in a standard graphical format, supplemented by text. It provides the reader with a very detailed understanding of the work performed in that business area. This skill set has been disseminated throughout out the department and is frequently used during the functional requirements definition process on other projects. It is also used to redesign the business process in an area without any automation. Further, it is often used to inform reorganization efforts.

#### Enterprise Content Management

In response to the needs of the business users, the EDMS solution functionality quickly expanded beyond simple document scanning and retrieval. It also includes importing documents from legacy solutions, such as the mainframe, and storing Microsoft Office documents in their



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native file formats.

The department has additional solutions that involve managing unstructured content, including Stellent (web content), Cardiff LiquidOffice (eDocs), unified messaging (VOIP), GlobalScan (MFDs), electronic purchase requests (EIOR), Legislative Tracking, Grants Management, and Contracts Tracking. Instead of creating isolated silos of unrelated content, the department is pursuing an approach to integrate the various sources of content into one search/retrieval platform. This will move the department beyond enterprise document management into true “enterprise content management.”

### Difficulty

Several of the qualities unique to this project contributed to its difficulty.

#### Complex Technology

As described previously, the variety of components utilized in this project created a complex technological environment. During the course of the project, each component was upgraded in order to ensure it could support the quantity of users and be a reliable source of mission critical content.

#### Fast Track Deployment

The standard protocol for content management solutions is to implement in phases, adding more categories of content and more tools for automation over time. However, the short timeline for completion required that the standard “phases” be implemented in rapid succession so that they often appeared to be a single, integrated deployment in the affected business unit. For instance, the Human Resources area can receive and distribute fax documents from their EDMS interface, capture documents to the system from their desktop applications, export documents to a CD or desktop for review by an interested party, automatically update all the index values on affected documents when employees change their name, scan and index documents using data from their legacy database and annotate documents to reflect decisions made. While each of these functions was a distinct development effort, they occurred so quickly as to appear to be a single deployment and were all documented in a single user manual.

In addition to rapid deployment within a business unit, the project required overlapping deployments in several units at a given time. This was a delicate balancing act and a challenging coordination effort.

#### Communication

Like all major projects, this one required communication within the project team and with stakeholders. Communication with management stakeholders was critical because many building design decisions were based on project outcomes. Communication with stakeholders in the business unit was critical because their efforts were required for backfile conversion and their buy-in was needed in order to ensure system adoption. Project team communications were critical in order to organize and complete work in the most efficient means possible. Since many of the project stakeholders were participating in the project in addition to their regular job duties, electronic communication quickly became an accepted method of communicating project information. In addition to using virtually every function for communication within Microsoft Outlook, the project team regularly published documents to the EDMS repository



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for reference. The project kickoff included guidelines for effective communication among team members, including issue escalation procedures. Electronic communication, supplemented by a weekly “touch bases” meeting of the core project team and a monthly meeting with management stakeholders, ensured that the actual work of the project was facilitated by the related communications instead of being detained by them.

### Project Team/Resources

The project started very soon after it was conceived. Therefore, the project team had to be built quickly, using mainly available resources. The resource manager worked with every division in the department to get staff “on loan” to the project, in exchange for staff development and training. These team members conducted the needs assessments, compiled the focus statements, completed the Business Process Modeling, oversaw the backfile conversion effort and developed the scanning solutions. Only a full time project manager (already assigned to EDMS) and two technical contractors were added. Miraculously, this diverse group quickly formed a cohesive team where each was able to contribute based on individual unique strengths and abilities. A “process” quickly evolved where each critical project deliverable was developed by the appropriate resource, reviewed by a qualified reviewer and put to use by well-informed users.

### Scope Control

It was both the blessing and the curse of this project that success in a business area would often trigger a request for further functionality or an implementation in a related business unit. Throughout the project, the project manager and the project sponsors kept the team focused on the core project objectives in order to prevent the potential (and often attractive) opportunities for “scope creep.”