

Scottish Water

EMC unites Scottish Water via document management



Business overview

Scottish Water is a publicly owned company, formed in 2002 by the merger of three Scottish water companies—East, West, and North of Scotland Water. Scottish Water is the fourth largest water and waste water service provider in the UK and with a turnover of £1 billion, it is one of Scotland’s top 20 businesses.

Scottish Water was formed to streamline water provision in Scotland for the benefit of its five million customers in 2.4 million households. It supplies 2.1 billion liters of drinking water and removes nearly a billion liters of waste water each day. Scottish Water’s head office is in Dunfermline, with principal offices in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Inverness. Scottish Water employs over 3,700 people across Scotland.

Challenges

Coping with a surge in customer correspondence

Providing high quality customer service has always been a top priority for Scottish Water, and as a result of the merger, the volume of customer correspondence greatly increased. On average, Scottish Water now processes 10,000 pieces of customer-related correspondence per year, including invoices, letters, planning applications, and FOI Act requests. The billing department alone processes 1,000 pieces of customer correspondence per week. In order to maintain customer satisfaction levels, Scottish Water had to ensure it maintained a fast and effective sorting and response system.

The type of documents Scottish Water needed to process also varied greatly. It generates not only bills and letters, but also large A0 color maps and plans from builders wanting water connections.

Previously, Scottish Water had used a paper-based filing system, which was not only time consuming, but also took up a lot of physical office space. This method put staff at a disadvantage, as files from across the different departments had to be stored centrally or duplicated. Subsequently, this system increased the risk of errors and lost documents and wasted valuable resources and manpower.

Regulatory compliance

As a regulated body, Scottish Water has a wide range of external and internal compliance regulations to meet. For example, the Government’s Emergency Planning regulation requires all documents related to coping with a disaster to be accessible to all users, with edit rights granted to a select few. Also, the introduction of the FOI Act requires Scottish Water to respond to public inquiries within twenty days. The customer relations department deals with roughly 2,000 requests per year or 37 per week, so it can be a very time consuming task to sort, answer, and reply to customers.

Benefits

- 88 percent reduction in the time it takes the billing department to process customer invoices
- Reduction in workload for the Drinking Water Quality team due to automated e-mail alerts
- Effective working with external bodies through remote access
- Compliance with government regulations
- Increased security around several sets of sensitive documents

EMC solution

Business profile

Customer

Scottish Water

Industry

Utilities

Challenges

- High volume of customer correspondence—10,000 per year
- Merger of three water companies greatly increased number of documents
- Wide range of the types of documents which needed to be scanned

Key Solutions

- EMC Documentum and EMC Captiva

Proof of concept

Scottish Water decided that it needed a way to manage the huge volume of customer correspondence, reducing costs and redistributing resources to more strategic areas. Scottish Water turned to its previous experience to choose a proven supplier. In 2000, before the joining of the three companies, West of Scotland Water used EMC® Documentum® 4 to store engineering drawings used by the operational team. Documentum enabled West of Scotland Water to effectively organize and store documents, including plans for treatment works and buildings.

“The newly formed Scottish Water recognized the success of EMC’s previous projects and it was a natural progression to implement it throughout the rest of the business,” said Bill Duff, program manager, Business Solutions and Support at Scottish Water.

Scottish Water initially piloted Documentum 5.25 and EMC Captiva® in 2005. Captiva was used to scan customer invoices which were inputted into Documentum where they could then be transferred into the customers’ records. Following the success of the pilot, Scottish Water extended its contract with EMC, purchasing a license for scanning one million documents per year. Documentum was implemented throughout the company, not only in the billing department, but also in customer relations, HR, finance, and IT.

“We chose EMC because of this excellent history with West of Scotland Water and we have not been disappointed. We have reaped substantial time savings benefits and we are better positioned to tackle all future growth and projects.”

Bill Duff, Program Manager, Business Solutions and Support at Scottish Water

In 2008, Scottish Water upgraded to Documentum 6 for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was part of a systematic, business-wide IT upgrade, which included moving to Sun Solaris servers and the introduction of VMWare®. Secondly, Scottish Water needed to gain external access to its servers as it was embarking on a £2 billion program to improve everything from water pipes to treatment sites. Many external bodies were used in this infrastructure improvement program, such as builders, surveyors, and engineers, all needing to access and give input to documents such as plans, rules of engagement, and specifications. Documentum 6 enabled both internal and external teams to share information and communicate effectively. Lastly, Documentum 6 also offered new features, such as virtualization, which provides the IT department with a more flexible working environment.

Summary

Customer correspondence time savings through automation

Scottish Water has been able to dramatically reduce the time taken to process its customer correspondence. For example, sorting out customer letters and invoices had previously taken two people from the billing department four hours each morning to copy new references into customer files. Following the application of Documentum, it now only takes one person one hour each morning—reducing input time by 88 percent.

Another area of Scottish Water to benefit was the Drinking Water Quality team. Previously, the team received notifications of water irregularities from the Drinking Water Quality Regulator (DWQR), the water regulatory body for Scotland. These were sent to a separate e-mail address from the teams' normal accounts, which meant they had to continuously log on and monitor two accounts, taking up time and doubling their workload. EMC was able to implement an automated e-mail scanning system, which sends the DWQR e-mails directly to the team and sends a copy of the original into the Documentum system. This new process means the team only has to monitor one e-mail account and any water quality issues can be addressed immediately.

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