



Paper Insurgency

Staying the Course with Laserfiche Enterprise Content Management

When it comes to supporting the aircraft that help soldiers protect citizens, no detail is too small to record. That's why the US Army's Cargo Helicopters Project Management Office (CHPMO) maintains exhaustive records on every design feature, maintenance procedure and safety analysis performed worldwide on the CH-47 "Chinook" helicopter. With 400 staff members generating new records every day, and with thousands of records series to follow, managing all these records is no easy task.

Nick Van Valkenburgh, information management analyst for CHPMO, is charged with maintaining order amongst CHPMO's files. It's not enough to simply archive these documents, however. The US Army must comply not only with National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) regulations, but also with guidelines issued by the Army Records and Information Management System (ARIMS). But Van Valkenburgh doesn't play the part of the put-upon records manager, for he has a powerful tool in his arsenal: a Laserfiche enterprise content management system.

CHPMO's journey to enterprise content management began rather unusually, and had nothing to do with increasing efficiency, streamlining workflow or complying with NARA, ARIMS or any other acronymic regulations. As Van Valkenburgh recalls, "It was what I call a 'drive-by tasking.' My boss walked by my desk one day and said, 'Nick, buy a computer and a scanner and get rid of that paper. The fire marshal just cited us for having our filing cabinets blocking the aisles.'"

That simple directive kick-started a much bigger project than anyone could have imagined. These code-violating cabinets contained almost four million pages, and, because the Army is a federal agency, it had to implement a system with Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC) certification. In addition, NARA recommends Department of Defense (DoD) 5015.2-certified solutions for all federal agencies.

"We looked at 40 systems initially," Van Valkenburgh says, "but we whittled it down to 10 based on which systems had JITC and DoD certifications and met our basic infrastructure compatibility requirements." Laserfiche Records Management Edition (RME) not only met those two requirements, but also had the sophistication and security features needed to manage the myriad records series in Van Valkenburgh's division. "We don't destroy some records related to an aircraft until ten years after it stops flying," he says. "RME was ideally suited to handle that kind of long-term records management."

As powerful as RME is, it was its ease of use that really won Van Valkenburgh over. JITC reports include a complexity index, a count of mouse clicks and pop-up screens required to perform a number of standard functions. Laserfiche had the lowest number of clicks and screens by far, so CHPMO ordered a five-week pilot program. Laserfiche's ease of installation was equally impressive. Notes Van Valkenburgh, "It took only 30 minutes to install all the servers. We thought we had done something wrong, so we uninstalled it. The second time, it only took 20 minutes. Everything worked right out of the box. It was really amazing."

During the pilot deployment, Van Valkenburgh saw the project grow in scope to include electronic records, as well as scanned paper records. This new undertaking added another wrinkle to the system requirements. Any system he implemented had to serve the needs of the entire enterprise, not just his project office. What began as a 400-user implementation instantly ballooned to a potential of 4,000.

Owing to its non-mainframe, SQL-based architecture, Laserfiche integrated easily into CHPMO's network environment. And its open architecture meant it would scale easily to accommodate the tenfold increase in staff. The simplicity and strength of the core Laserfiche platform were very important, but so was its modular construction. "We needed an all-in-one solution," Van Valkenburgh says, "not a bunch of software systems mashed together. And we wanted the capability to add workflow and Web-based components, even though we couldn't implement them right away."

Gradually, staff are scanning in the contents of CHPMO's 150 filing cabinets. Laserfiche's flexible search capabilities have made indexing the four million pages easier than anticipated. "Given Laserfiche's searching power, there was no need to create a complex folder structure," Van Valkenburgh says. "We don't have to navigate through a document tree to get what we need. That's really helped us streamline records management."

Van Valkenburgh has many insights to share following such an involved installation. First, he stresses the importance of thorough planning. "Preparation can, and should, take more time than scanning," he says. Likewise, quality control is absolutely critical. "If you don't have any quality control measures, your repository has no credibility. We tried bringing in some electronic documents from our existing system, but it turned out that the original files were corrupted before they were

transferred. Obstacles like that really illustrate the need for quality control."

Having received excellent technical support, both from Laserfiche and from CHPMO's Laserfiche reseller, Van Valkenburgh also believes that support should be a major criterion when evaluating enterprise content management solutions. "You're going to have a lifetime relationship with these folks," he says, "so make sure that you look carefully at the level of support you'll be getting."

Having spoken at the Laserfiche Institute Conference, Van Valkenburgh wholeheartedly recommends that Laserfiche users continue their education by attending. "It's absolutely priceless," he says.

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Of course, Laserfiche isn't the sole focus at CHPMO. As Van Valkenburgh puts it, "CHPMO's top priority is supporting our troops." Thus, he currently has few resources at his disposal for in-house efficiency upgrades. But that doesn't mean he's scrapped his plans for expanding the Laserfiche system. He looks forward to implementing Workflow, as well as integrating Laserfiche with other line-of-business applications.

Despite some initial skepticism over adopting a digital business model, Van Valkenburgh has noticed his staff becoming increasingly appreciative of the benefits Laserfiche has brought. And the word is spreading—staff from other divisions are asking him how they can implement Laserfiche, too. "I'll tell you this much," he says. "No one who's made the switch to Laserfiche has had any regrets."

About Laserfiche

A resource for more than 28,000 public- and private-sector organizations around the world since 1987, Laserfiche creates simple, elegant enterprise content management solutions that help organizations run smarter. From streamlining digital records management to automating the agenda process, Laserfiche helps improve efficiency while integrating easily within any environment.

Your Next Step

Please call **(800) 985-8533** or e-mail **info@laserfiche.com** for more information.

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