

Network Rail

EMC helps 20,000 Network Rail staff be more efficient



Business overview

Network Rail has been responsible for the running of Britain's rail infrastructure since 2002. It has 35,000 employees and an annual turnover of £6 billion.

Network Rail carries three million passengers daily, including nearly 80 percent of those travelling in and out of London. Twenty billion tonnes of freight are transported every year, including nearly 80 percent of the coal and coke (a by-product of the petroleum refining process) used by the UK's power stations and over a third of all metal transported for UK industry. The company manages 20,000 miles of track, including 40,000 bridges and tunnels and 17 major stations, 2,500 leased stations, and 8,200 commercial properties.

Challenges

Network Rail has approximately 50 sites throughout Great Britain with 20,000 employees connected to its IT network. The rail company has a number of core business applications in use throughout its organisation, including Oracle eBusiness Suite and Primavera, asset management systems, several standard office productivity tools, and some niche railway applications.

Network Rail was experiencing a rapid growth in data in its content management system—it had increased by 10 percent in just a few months. It was also storing eight terabytes (TB) of data, equating to roughly 10 million documents.

An enhanced document management system

A number of other factors contributed to Network Rail's decision to adopt an enterprise content management (ECM) solution. Firstly, the company recognised that greater efficiencies could be achieved through an enhanced document management system that could reduce data duplication. System searches were inconsistent and slow and there were too many channels for finding information, causing considerable confusion for employees. Secondly, there was external pressure from the Office of Rail Regulation, to which Network Rail is accountable. And finally, there was added pressure to tighten auditing of data, which necessitated a more transparent way of storing documentation.

Network Rail required a sustainable, scalable platform that could provide document storage, search, and retrieval for 20,000 people.

"Our goal with this project was to get the right information to the right people," said Colin Hanley, Information Management Delivery Manager, Network Rail. "We had a number of challenges in the way that our data was being stored and version control was unreliable. This was a big problem particularly when you have civil engineers working on high specification projects. We were also regularly re-inventing the wheel by re-creating data that we already had somewhere else within our organisation."

EMC solution

A long term solution—not a quick fix

Network Rail put the project up for tender and decided to deploy EMC® Documentum® 5.3, an enterprise content management platform enabling rapid and flexible development, configuration, and deployment of enterprise content applications. EMC Documentum allows organisations to create content applications and solutions on a single foundation and build a common content repository. With EMC Documentum, organisations can manage, store, secure, and deliver unstructured content in a systematic manner.

Network Rail was impressed with the breadth of options available in EMC Documentum, particularly its ability to cope with different file formats. This capability was crucial for Network Rail as its data ranged from word-based text to scanned material to video and audio clips.

Colin Hanley said: “When we were looking for a partner to work with for this project, EMC was our first choice because of its leading edge capabilities in document management. Strategically, we were looking for a longer term solution as opposed to a quick fix, which EMC was able to deliver.”

EMC Documentum was piloted with two internal audiences. The pilot was deemed a success as the technology was easy to deploy and use and created a dialogue between colleagues and departments, enabling a transfer of skills that went above and beyond Network Rail’s original project objective.

“EMC Documentum is the cornerstone of our ECM strategy. It has provided us with a more efficient way of storing our data and we want to maximise that by making sure people know how to exploit all of its functionality—being able to publish data to the intranet easily for example. It’s not just about archiving. We are creating a best practice template through our deployment of EMC Documentum.”

Colin Hanley, IM Delivery Manager, Network Rail

Improving access to information

Network Rail’s EMC Documentum deployment, delivered by EMC Consulting, is part of the company’s larger ECM initiative, known as the “improving access to information” programme. The implementation of EMC Documentum took only six months to complete. Network Rail aimed to embed the technology throughout its organisation, which will increase productivity and facilitate better sharing of resources—a process that will be complete by the end of 2009.

“Our work now is around cultural change,” explained Colin Hanley. “EMC Documentum is the cornerstone of our ECM strategy. It has provided us with a more efficient way of storing our data and we want to maximise that by making sure people know how to exploit all of its functionality—being able to publish data to the intranet easily for example. It’s not just about archiving. We are creating a best practice template through our deployment of EMC Documentum.”

Improved retrieval and trusted documentation

EMC Documentum has provided National Rail with increased process acceleration, in particular a 60 percent reduction in content approval cycles. Data is now fully searchable, which also makes auditing a much easier task.

“For me, the art of storage is retrieval and EMC Documentum has really delivered on this through the simplification of metadata structure and implementation of a ‘silo-busting’ security model,” said Colin Hanley.

Business profile

Customer

Network Rail

Industry

Transport

Challenges

- Data duplication
- Silos of information
- Slow and inconsistent system search
- Inconsistent grouping of multiple media data types and version control
- No audit trail on documents

Key solutions

- EMC Documentum 5.3, upgraded to v 6.5
June 2009

Benefits

- Increased process efficiency
- Increase in productivity and trust
- Better sharing of resources
- Full audit path
- Better information sharing
- Deduplication of data

Previously, data was being stored in a number of different locations such as on shared drives and at desks—now staff have a single source of truth. Network Rail has initially migrated 100,000 documents from civil engineers so that all the latest drawings are stored on the system. To ease reporting, there is now a solid baseline to work from. As well, new recruits can get up to speed much quicker than before, with less time being wasted looking for the relevant documents. As a result, there have been significant efficiency gains in terms of new starter productivity.

Summary

Over the next year Network Rail aims to complete the EMC roll-out across the remainder of the company, doubling the existing user base to 22,000 staff. The company also plans to develop the documents records management policy more deeply to include automated archiving.

Network Rail also plans to integrate EMC Documentum with Microsoft SharePoint during the coming year. This means that when data is acquired from new projects, staff will be able to move it into EMC Documentum seamlessly.

EMC²

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